

UNCHARTED 4 PS4'S BEST GAME?

PLAY. ™

ISSUE
270

240
PS4 & VITA
GAMES RATED



NO MAN'S SKY

THE HANDS-ON VERDICT



PS4 PS3 Vita PSN WelcomePLAY

The UK's greatest digital PlayStation magazine



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Full review of Drake's most exciting adventure yet!

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YOU SHOULD CARE

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CALL OF DUTY?

ONE SMALL STEP



IT SEEMED ONLY fitting that we should run a *No Man's Sky* cover for our first issue after we took that one giant leap into digital-only space. Not just so we could squeeze more mileage out of that Armstrong quote, but because there are plenty of parallels between what Hello Games is doing with its take on space exploration and what we're doing by blasting off away from print. A small team chasing a dream, taking risks and looking to try its experienced hand at something new and exciting... sound familiar? Okay, so I'm not heading up creation of something that is practically infinite like those talented folks over at Hello Games are. But still, you get the point.

In any case, I'd be amazed if you were even reading these words, since we have recently been graced with PS4's biggest game yet and Naughty Dog did not disappoint. It felt like the hype had reached such a level that the game could never hope to live up to it, but it does. *Uncharted 4* is, frankly, a masterpiece and while I've heard some complain that it doesn't have set-pieces on the same level as 2 and 3 did, I'm not even sure the series needs them any more. Popular games like *Minecraft*, *The Witcher 3* and *Left 4 Dead* show that emergent moments can be just as powerful as even the biggest, loudest scripted sequence and by allowing player-created highlights to share equal billing with those exciting moments when Naughty Dog is pulling the strings, *Uncharted 4* is a far more fluid and dynamic game than its predecessors.

But you already knew that, right? It's not like you haven't been playing the damn thing since the minute it was available – it's too much of an event for that. So I'll wrap up there for now and let you get back to Drake. He's probably wondering where you are by now.

Enjoy the issue and I'll see you online...

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CURRENTLY PLAYING

Uncharted 4: A Thief's End

PLAY⁺ Contents

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HANDS-ON WITH NO MAN'S SKY

Boldly going where no space game has gone before



INTRODUCING MAFIA III

The sequel you never knew you wanted



INFINITE WARFARE

Your first look at this year's *Call Of Duty*



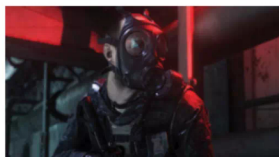
UNCHARTED 4 IS FINALLY HERE!

Full review of Naughty Dog's masterpiece



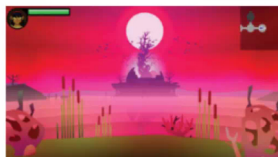
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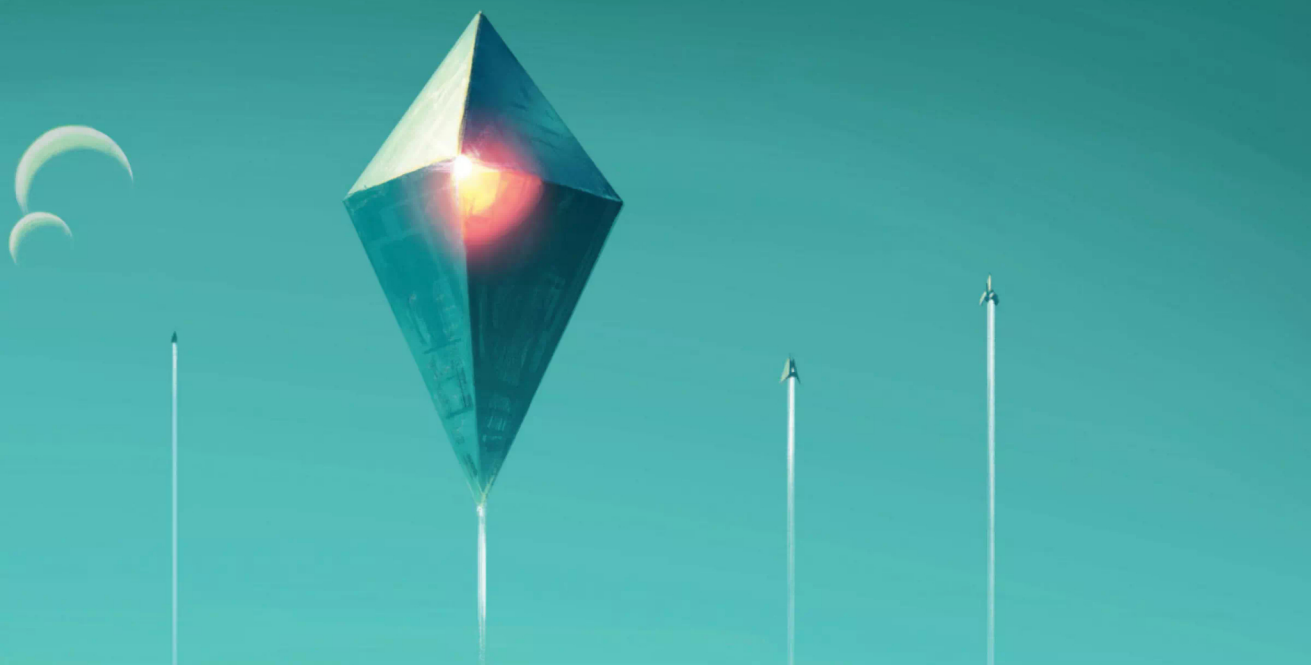
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FEATURE | NO MAN'S SKY



ONE GIANT



LEAP

NO MAN'S SKY IS THE GAME WE'VE ALL BEEN WAITING TO SEE UP CLOSE. FINALLY, WE'VE BEEN GIVEN THE CHANCE TO PLAY IT AT LENGTH AND SPEAK WITH THE TEAM BEHIND IT...



IT

STARTED WITH FOUR GUYS AND A SMALL ROOM WITH WALLS COVERED IN SCI-FI BOOK COVERS.

Or, perhaps it would be more accurate to say, it started out as a bit of a joke. "We had this thing that we called *Project Skyscraper*, which we always had on our website under Games That We Make," explains Sean Murray, managing director and co-founder of Hello Games as we chat about the formative days of *No Man's Sky*. "The other game that we make in the description said 'Secret Project: The most ambitious game ever made'. And it was this nice little joke that we had going on amongst ourselves. 'We could do this or this and this is how it would be built' and so on."

'The most ambitious game ever made.' That's an apt way to describe what we're now sitting in front of, with its 18 quintillion possible planets. *No Man's Sky* is ambitious in its scale; ambitious for an indie team of around 16 developers (the days of Hello Games being just four people ended during the development of *Joe Danger*, much as some continue to share that number); ambitious in its use of technology; ambitious in the variety of gameplay it's offering, something that's been somewhat unclear until this moment.

Clearly, the idea of making something hugely ambitious stuck in the minds of the Hello Games team, even if it hadn't been intended as something to follow through. Given that *Joe Danger* had been born from the original four founders of the team playing around with some old toys and being drawn to an Evel Knievel doll, we wondered what process had spawned such a gargantuan new project. "We took four of us and we went back into that little room trying to almost recreate the situation we had when we were making *Joe Danger*," says Murray. "It was like, 'Let's have this little, new startup before we think of another game.' We didn't tell any of the rest of the team about what we were making or what we were doing and we properly blocked off the door, so we had our own little entrance and stuff."

That's where the sci-fi book covers came into play. "We covered the walls, floor to ceiling, with sci-fi imagery. You can't sit in a room like that and not just soak it in; even if you don't want to." That original inspiration still holds firm in the spirit and execution of *No Man's Sky*. As we experienced walking around a planet for the first time in the game, the bright colours and strange creatures that surrounded us looked like they could have been taken right off the pages of a pulp sci-fi novel. Like so much of this sort of fiction, *No Man's Sky* is steeped in an earnest love of exploration and science.

As we walk amid deep red grass, with small mole-like creatures skittering around our ankles, we can see on the misty horizon mountains and miles upon miles of more vegetation and potential life. Pulling out a set of binoculars, we scan the animals and planets around us, identifying them and registering what minerals or resources are available. As has been mentioned before, any new discovery you find can be named by you and that will remain in place for all other players who happen to land on the same planet (if that ever happens; more on that later). Feeling satisfied that we had named enough animals some variation of the name 'Bob', we



hopped into our ship and began to launch ourselves out into the cosmos, the sky turning from blue to a rich purple as we broke through the atmosphere and into near orbit around the planet. Where to now?

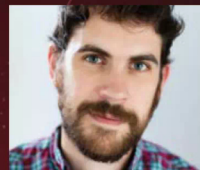
That was pretty much the question that seemed to plague Sean Murray in the later stages of *Joe Danger 2*. While the concept of what would become *No Man's Sky* was floating in the air, it hadn't actually been started yet and as managing director of a recently expanded team, he needed to make a decision about the future of the studio.

"I couldn't picture myself making *Joe Danger 3* or something that was of a similar size," he tells us. "And I could see that coming, almost like the lights of this truck that's going to hit you and it's moving really slowly but you can't stop it. I just wanted to get away from that. I was like, 'What I actually want to do is start up a new studio, and that sounds really bad even though I'm here with all you guys and we're all having fun and I've employed you all, I sort of just want to get away from all this'. This is the responsibility: I have to think of a game idea that will require ten people. I have to think of something that's just about doable. But not too few people needed and not too many. You end up coming up with something that's a bit like *Joe Danger*. I just wanted to do a different thing."





■ As you gather resources and gain new upgrades, you'll be able to travel faster between planets and star clusters. A warp drive can be added and charged ready for a leap to an entirely new region of the game as you explore.



HALLO SPACEBOY

Some snappy Q&A with Hello Games' managing director and co-founder Sean Murray

What's your favourite space exploration game?

I would actually say the original *Elite*.

What's your favourite space movie?

These are not easy questions! I'm going to say *Aliens*.

What fictional planet would you love to visit?

I reckon I would go for Tatooine.

Would you take the Virgin Galactic flight?

Yes. If I could afford it, absolutely.

What indie game has most impressed you recently?

Impressed is difficult. Big games for me were *Legend Of Grimrock*, *Talos Principle* I really loved. Recently *Firewatch* and *The Witness*, they are really impressive. That's actually the word I would use. This sounds bad, but I don't think they're my favourite games ever or anything like that, but they are stunning.

What's your favourite space fact you've learnt while making the game?

My favourite thing is everyone calls star systems 'solar systems' and stars 'suns' and every time that I correct them they look at me like I'm crazy. There is only one sun and there is only one solar system. I've gotten to the point where I call everything solar systems and suns because I've given up. It's not really a fact, but I need to get that knowledge out there. It should be star and star system.

What sci-fi novel would you recommend?

Dune. That's my favourite of all time.



"Everyone else had gone home, and I had to stay until five in the morning, so I just started writing code"

And so as Murray waited through the night for a conference call with Microsoft (to talk about getting a little more attention for *Joe Danger Special Edition* on XBLA), he began to write some prototype code, fleshing out something new. "Everyone else had gone home and I had to stay until five in the morning, so I just started writing code," continues Murray. "The guys came in [the next] morning and I had stayed all night and I was like, 'We're doing it! We're going to do *Skyscraper*!' And I had this awful demo. It looked a bit like *Minecraft*, but on a planet and I said, 'Aren't you all excited?' And no one was because it looked terrible and impossible. But I then just developed that over a year."

At this point, the rest of the team began in earnest creating the game we see today. "A huge amount of the development has been into the tools and systems just to make it possible," says Grant Duncan, one of the original four founders of Hello Games and art director on *No Man's Sky*. "If it was just the play aspect, it wouldn't have taken nearly so long. So much

time has been spent on iteration and the back and forth, I like the word 'research'; it makes it sound very serious, like we're scientists. 'We do important work here!' But a lot of it has been trial and error as well, and a lot of it has been born out of necessity, the procedural tools, and choosing that path."

It begs the question: how much of what Murray originally built in that late-night coding session still exists in the game as we've seen it today? "I find this really... not depressing, but... after about five months you could look at it and look at it now and go, 'that looks a bit like *No Man's Sky*,'" Murray explains. "Which is a really nice feeling in some ways because there's some consistency there. You could fly between one planet and another and in fact the first planet you flew to was snowing – and a lot like the one we just showed you in some ways – so there's a moment of that being really nice. There was some consistency of vision. But there's also a moment of 'What on earth have we been doing for the last two years? It was there!'" »



■ The building blocks for animals in *No Man's Sky* are based upon the skeletal makeup and features of many creatures on earth, as well as some stranger, original concepts. In fact, they will get stranger the closer you get to the centre of the universe, perhaps changing some of the biology established on the outer rim.



■ Ships are procedurally generated, but cannot be externally customised. You can however upgrade their capabilities with a limited number of slots. Some more advanced crafts can be given bigger upgrades; trading up is an important part of the game.



■ Even in the dark and mysterious depths of space you need to watch how you behave. Mine too aggressively or attack alien crafts too often and you'll have sentinel robots and intergalactic police forces chasing after you.



BLURRING THE LINES

With such a massive game and talk of a full retail price-point on release, we discuss with Sean Murray what it means to be 'indie'

"I never know how to take that question," Murray says, as we bring up the question of Hello Games being an indie game maker. "I haven't had it many times, but I've had it from other indies. And it's like, 'Guys! Are you saying I'm not in the club anymore?'"

Its indie status is now occasionally questioned simply because of the scale of the game this team is making, but Murray has his answer for that. "[Being] independent is important to me; we're self-funded and we have creative control and we go and make our own games. If a game is terrible, we go bankrupt. Things like that are really important to the game making process."

And Sony has allowed the team the space to work without interference, to maintain that independent control. "Sony has been really good. Shuhei [Yoshida, President of

Sony's Worldwide Studios for Sony Computer Entertainment] doesn't come down to the office and tell us what to do. Much as I love him, it's kind of nice that that doesn't happen.

Sony isn't trying to tell us how to make the game, and that's a good thing and as it should be."

So what does it mean to be indie, really? "To me I think of music, of indie bands when that meant something, innovation and taking risks and being a bit left of field. Having this overall spirit of running very close to the wire.

"It's hard to define, but the opposite of corporate, basically. That is something personally I feel that Hello Games still is. That's the bit I would actually be sensitive about. I would feel hurt if someone said 'You guys are really corporate now'. I would argue with them."

"We're self-funded and we have creative control"



As we spend the day with Hello Games, this humility surfaces again and again, playing down what the team has achieved. Perhaps it's born of wanting to make the game feel understandable and less intimidating than its number of planets and deep mathematical foundations might suggest. More likely, it's a fear that too much hype might end up hurting *No Man's Sky* more than anything, but it is extraordinary. We can understand the hesitation to blow their own trumpet, but allow us to strike up the brass band in their honour. *No Man's Sky* is monumental.

The ice planet Murray mentioned is a desolate, dangerous place and one of many hostile planets you can find yourself on, dictated by their position in relation to the star they orbit. The planet is so cold in fact that, without shelter, our thermal shield is depleting. Murray explains that the shield can be upgraded, along with various other parts of your suit, as the game progresses, both by crafting new elements as you discover the designs and by trading. More on that soon.

While desolate is the word we used a moment ago to describe this planet, we wouldn't want to give you the wrong impression about how much was there to explore. Creatures still populated this world. There were caverns to delve into (offering some protection from the cold), rare mineral resources that could be converted into fuel and ammo for our equipment. While our own universe appears to be a largely barren place, Hello Games has made a clear decision to make sure every world you find has something of interest.

"We don't actually do completely spherical planets in the game; we always have some interest in them because people think the game's broken if they land on a planet like that," reveals Murray. "In the real universe you do get completely spherical planets, but not in *No Man's Sky*." Likewise, each planet is relatively uniform in its environment, which has a twofold advantage for the developer. "We could support sub-biomes and stuff like that and have poles that always have ice on them, but we want players to land on a planet and think 'Right, it's that planet with the red grass and the dinosaurs', and not land on the desert part of it and then ignore the planet. And there's a reason for that; every design decision that we make is held against a thing and that's 'Does this encourage people to explore and help people to want to go out?'. And I think that's what's different about the game. We've built a universe and that's what it should be about."

The other advantage, of course, is that it keeps the procedural planet formation a little easier to manage and save. Murray begins our session with the game by working through a series of test planets that shows how the mathematical algorithms at the heart of *No Man's Sky* play out world by world. What this means is that we begin on a flat planet, with nothing but a sky and a ground texture. Then we're on a uniformly bumpy world, formed from a single sine wave equation. The scale is still massive, but it's very disorientating being surrounded by identical hills as far as the eye can see. Then we warp to a world with several sine waves forming the surface of the planet and now things are beginning to look a little more natural. We're seeing how the equations that help form these planets on the fly as you discover them will create something interesting and believable.

"You can just about see how it goes up and down and if you look out at the horizon you can sort of see that it just looks like a graph," Murray interjects. "To me, that's all I see. Hopefully you're looking at something that looks like an approximation of hills and stuff, but for me it's like I'm in some kind of application that allows you to walk around inside a formula. It's super obvious to me, so I can't see it any other way." »

» The matrix code of the game falls away even more though on the final world where plants, animals and water are added to the surroundings. Leaping between these worlds (which we should emphasise are scaled like real planets and would take ages to traverse on foot alone), we're almost seeing a slowed-down version of how each world in *No Man's Sky* is formed in a matter of milliseconds as you approach the surface. The game reaches into its grab-bag of elements, puts them through its algorithms and a world is formed before your eyes. Once formed, it's seeded and saved for all who might return. Even the major changes you might make to the surface of the world (you can use Land Disrupter grenades to mine the planet's surface with the right upgrades) will remain.

And everything else is built this way too, from the plants to the animals. It's been an adjustment for the rest of the design team according to Duncan. "Early on in the project, I definitely didn't like the procedural aspect because I'm so used to having control over everything," he admits. "I've had complete control; I know exactly how it's going to look. And you just don't have that with procedural things. It's like a balance between adding rules to procedural systems to try and influence the results, but if you do that too much you end up taking away what makes procedural useful. You take the magic away because you're trying to control it too much. That's been a big learning curve for me, the need to relax a little bit and accept that sometimes you're going to get results that aren't exactly how you would have done it."

"I do it a great disservice when people ask how it's possible and I say 'procedural generation', but I say it as if it's magic," adds Murray, waving his hand as he repeats the words, "Procedural generation". "Someone asked yesterday, 'then presumably it's all made for you, so do you have anything to do?'. Yes, we're trying to make three different games. One where you're on a planet and it's a survival game and one where you're in space with combat and another where it's about joining the two up, fighting over planets and trading between them and all that sort of thing. Apart from just the content, which is procedurally generated, it's a huge game."

Because ultimately there's a pretty big difference between random and procedural even if the latter can sometimes feel like the former. Procedural content is crafted. It's only possible through making the right building blocks and creating the systems that can merge and meld those blocks into something that always makes sense. That's been the challenge for Hello Games; masses of content creation and refining the code behind the game so that it can keep creating interesting worlds.

"It's like organised chaos," is the take of Paul Weir, audio director at Hello Games, who also has the challenge of developing a soundscape for these worlds and creatures that, chances are, he'll never get to see. "A lot of what we do is within these inherently chaotic systems, but you can contain them and make them meaningful. That's what you want. You want something to feel purposeful."

"I guess, with audio as with the art, with the procedural system it's really easy to make a huge variety of random things," adds Duncan. "It's [technically] easy to produce a million different sounds, but to make all of those sounds relevant, to have them make sense in context? It's the same with the visuals I can make. I can make a thousand creatures,

and they can all look a little big ugly, but to get them looking all feeling like they're real creatures, that's where the real hard work comes in, the trial and error."

Walking along the development floor of Hello Games' two-storey studio we get to see some of this process unfold. A small art team (about four people) is building the animals you'll meet piece by piece. They're using a generator to constantly change their height, length, weight and more and each time you can see it's kind of the same animal, but also very different, as if the evolutionary path of the species was affected depending on the planet. When you land on a planet, just as the hills, mountains and seas are placed, so the game is asking itself, "What animal life could survive here?" and "What sort of characteristics might it exhibit?". Then it begins applying kinetics, it gives the animal a voice, which is completely synthesised by Paul Weir's programs and adapts to the size and variety of creature, and is even given an animation style for how it walks dependent on its skeletal makeup and proportions.

You won't be seeing any speedy mammoths, or at least you probably shouldn't.

"I almost think of working with the procedural systems like working with a weird collaborator that is a little bit unpredictable but is like a mad genius," is Duncan's rather excellent way of looking at it. "Sometimes they do amazing things, and I'm just journeying through the game with them, pumping out bizarre artwork."

There are a lot of

misconceptions still about what *No Man's Sky* really is and what procedural generation can do, though. "I think, especially as it's in a sci-fi setting, people almost assume it's a game that contains every game," says Duncan. "A lot of people, they think we've created this infinite game generator." So what is *No Man's Sky* when you break it down? What do you actually do?

It begins on the outer edge of the universe. You have a small ship and limited technology, but your overarching mission is to get to the centre of the universe. What's there? That's yet to be revealed, but you can be confident it's the one spot in the universe where you actually have a fair chance of meeting another player since they'll be heading there too. So, in the meantime, you journey and you survive. What took us a little by surprise, as we explored a small star system, was how much of a survival game this really is. On extreme hot or cold worlds you'll need a thermal shield to keep you going, but the rewards might be great. You could even upgrade this feature of your explorer to specialise in resource gathering on the outer worlds of star systems. It's not unlike *Minecraft*, in a way, as you're dropped with little knowledge and little instruction into a procedural world and you need to craft and explore in order to get further and achieve greater things.

Mojang's *Minecraft* was in fact a major influence on the team, but not for its gameplay; more as a touchstone for what can be achieved. "It's great to have *Minecraft* because you can use it for everything," Murray tells us. "There are all these rules that people thought existed such as 'People will only buy *Call Of Duty*', and it's just really nice to say that the best selling game in the world is *this*. It proves that you don't need photo-realistic graphics, it proves that you don't need massive cutscenes, it proves that you can be really creative and

"I think of working with the procedural systems like working with a weird collaborator that is a little bit unpredictable but is like a mad genius"





■ Landing pads and bases such as this can be found on many planets. In fact, in space you'll often be able to see lines leading to planets through the cosmos. These indicate trading routes of alien species, which is a good sign that you might find something on the surface.

KEEPING IT SIMPLE

For all the scale and complexity of the universe Hello Games is generating and guiding, the team says it has to keep things under control

In applying procedural generation models to art design and audio, art director Grant Duncan and audio director Paul Weir, probably had the biggest adjustments to make to apply their skills to *No Man's Sky*. However, it's the simplicity of the programming that gives them room to explore and create.

"You never need to make a system more complex than it absolutely needs to be," says Weir. "If it's looking like it's complex, it's probably wrong. The research behind it, working through the problem? That's complicated. The solution is often really straightforward and very simple. That's what elegant programming is all about. You don't want complicated programming."

Weir pauses, hesitant for a moment, and turns to Duncan. "Was that bollocks?" "No, it was *gold*," laughs Duncan. Weir joins in.

"For some programmers – not here, not ones I've tended to work with – there's almost a perverse pride in how complicated your code can be," Weir continues. "Look at its complexity! But actually that's not the mark of good code. We've got complex enough systems that if we took that direction it would be chaos."



THE NUMBERS EXPLAINED

IMPORTANT FACTS AND FIGURES YOU NEED TO KNOW



QUINTILLIONS QUADRILLIONS TRILLIONS BILLIONS MILLIONS THOUSANDS HUNDREDS
18,446,744,073,709,551,616
POSSIBLE PLANETS IN NO MAN'S SKY

■ This is based on *No Man's Sky* using a 64-bit seed system for generating planets. And what is that? The seed number is what the game remembers to regenerate the planet again exactly as you found it, and it can handle numbers up to 64 digits long. That leads to over 18 quintillion possible numbers, hence that's the number of possible planets. The important word though may be 'possible'. It doesn't necessarily mean that's the total number, but rather it indicates how unique each planet has the chance to be and how many there could be without repetition.

IT'S A MATHEMATICAL IMPROBABILITY YOU'LL MEET ANOTHER PLAYER

■ This is something Hello Games is actually a little concerned about. The universe is so large that if 10 million people play, they could have 1,844,674,407,371 planets each without sharing worlds. Under such circumstances all the naming mechanics and discovery might seem it's for nothing. But since everyone is heading towards the centre of the universe you should start seeing others the deeper you get into the game.

IF A PLANET IS FOUND
EVERY SECOND IT WILL TAKE
585 BILLION
YEARS TO FIND THEM ALL

■ Pretty simple maths on this one, dividing the number by 60 to get minutes, 60 again to get hours, 24 to get days, and finally 365 to get years.

THERE ARE 16 PEOPLE WORKING ON NO MAN'S SKY

■ Hello Games started as four developers with triple-A backgrounds. Sean Murray was a technical lead at Criterion working on games like *Burnout 3* and *Black*. Grant Duncan arrived from Sumo Digital. Ryan Doyle was also at Criterion before working at Kuju on *Geometry Wars: Galaxies* where fellow co-founder David Ream also worked. Since then the team has expanded, first in the development of *Joe Danger's* spin-offs and sequels to around ten developers and now to 16, with roughly 4 artists and 8 programmers making up the bulk of development staff.

GENERATION GAMES

No Man's Sky is the latest in a long history of innovators in crafted content randomised through mathematics. Here are some more important contributors

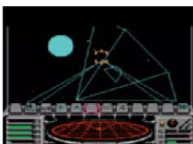
BENEATH APPLE MANOR (1978)

Argued by some to be the first procedurally generated game, *Beneath Apple Manor* is essentially a roguelike, although it predates *Rogue* by a couple of years. You must work your way through a series of dungeons with ten rooms per level, finally reaching a Golden Apple as your prize on the last floor.



ELITE (1984)

The legendary space explorer used a similar system of seed numbers to store planetary data as *No Man's Sky* does now, using it as a way to reduce the amount of data that was needed to make the game. It ended up with eight galaxies containing 256 planets each, although it could have been a lot more.



DIABLO (1996)

The great populariser of the dungeon-crawling genre, *Diablo* used procedural generation for its dungeon layouts, making each dive into the game something unique. The building blocks were always the same, but it kept things a little unpredictable, and would-be adventurers on their toes.



.KKRIEGER (2004)

This was essentially a tech demo of what could be achieved through procedural generation to keep file sizes small. *.kkrieger* uses only 97,280 bytes of disk space to store the entire game. And as you can see, it's not a bad-looking experience. It's still available to download for free as a beta.



LEFT 4 DEAD (2008)

What we love about Turtle Rock's zombie co-op shooter is that while the levels are fixed, it's the AI behaviour that's procedural, managed by the game's AI Director. It reads the movement and placement of the players and sends out the horde accordingly, and that means no two games are the same.



MINECRAFT (2011)

It's one of the most played games around and every time someone starts a new game-world, it's procedurally-generated. It's actually been estimated that given *Minecraft*'s own seeding system, it could create a world even larger than *No Man's Sky*, except it keeps its levels instanced separately.



THE WITNESS (2016)

Jonathan Blow's excellent puzzle experience saves its procedural content until right at the end and it's completely optional. The final puzzles are generated procedurally and you have to complete them against a time limit, which means all that sketching and slow-solving you could do before is gone. It's devious.



Interacting with monoliths like this one will allow you to learn more of the four different alien race languages in the game. You'll often need to guess based on a limited context what the monolith wants from you to get the best result, though.



» innovative and different. You can see people in the industry using it all the time as an example, 'this disproves loads of the things that you were saying and thinking about gamers and how people play games.'"

And so Hello Games has made a space survival game so vast that getting to the centre of the universe will be a Herculean task, while just meeting another player among so many planets will be such a rare occurrence it will be electric. You'll search and discover, earning money for everything you find and earning greater riches the rarer the creature (nocturnal animals, for instance, are worth more). You'll gather resources and craft new gear for yourself and your ship. And you'll trade, but not necessarily with other players because, as mentioned, they're not going to be easy to find. We got to take a look at one of the four alien races you'll interact with in *No Man's Sky* and each has its own history, language and lineage you can learn about. Each individual you meet is also procedurally created in terms of their body proportions, clothing and voice so just like in the real world every individual should look pretty unique.

The monoliths you've probably spotted in some images and videos are actually Rosetta Stones for alien speech, giving you single words that will be translated for you the text time to speak. Over time, through finding more monoliths and just having successful conversations, more words will unlock until hopefully one day you might even be fluent in an alien tongue. Of course, these languages will remain consistent so in theory someone could just translate them and post a handy dictionary online sometime after release, but even so it's a lot of fun. Chatting on the ice world with one alien on a base we could only make out one word, but figured he might want to sell us a gun for some resources. In making the deal we now had a weapon that would allow faster entry to the factory just a little further along, in which we could unlock a new technology to be crafted. As we shot at the door and then switched to the alternate fire of a laser-cutter (better for mining), sentinels started to



"What I want to scream at people is that you'll just be able to play lots of different ways"

take an interest in us and attacked. These small robots float around and defend planets from resource thieves like us, but it can't be helped. If that journey to the centre is going to happen, we need whatever is behind this door. Acts of theft and space piracy are open to you if you're ready to face the consequences and we were assured that there are other ways into that factory via stealth, if we could have found them, but the sentinels are always watching, even off-planet. Shoot too many cargo ships and you'll start building a wanted level and just like in *GTA*, your criminal activity will attract greater and more forceful retribution the longer you persist.

And, of course, the world persists. This is a gigantic universe so large that meeting another player is mathematically going to be a rare and special happening, but it *is* a shared world. The discoveries you make will affect other players; what they find will affect you. And with it all being made from the building blocks this team has been making for the last three years, you can't help but appreciate the craftsmanship of it all, allowing some space between different animals, plants and even sounds so that every world sounds unique instead of just a little turn of a dial different to the last, and that's taken some time and some challenging questions.

"How do you create a sound that sounds organic and could belong to a creature?" asks Weir. "How do you perform that, and how does that interact with the game mechanics? In designing that whole pipeline, we've ended up with a really interesting solution for interactive sound design for computer games. In a way, it's *totally* different to what anyone's ever done. It's a combination of computer performers and human



■ Animations are assigned to creatures as they appear to correctly match their physique. The same goes for the sounds they make, depending on their temperament and size.

performers and having that work in real-time in a game. There's lots of interesting ways we can take the tech from this project... It's really fascinating."

So there's a lot going on with *No Man's Sky*. There's survival to consider, crafting and trade to enjoy. There's space combat and plenty of it too if you want to get into that. Space stations can be landed on – all procedurally designed, although from a slightly more limited number of base elements as we understand it. And at the centre is something to chase after. But even then, Murray seems a little uncomfortable putting everything on a chase to the middle of the universe.

"I never know if it was a good thing or not to say you have to get to the centre of the universe, because it helps people to understand the game and that's why we said it – it is an important part of the game – but what I want to scream at people is you'll just be able to play lots of different ways," Murray insists. "I'm actually pretty sure when they pick up the controller, a lot of people won't care about the centre anymore."

And when you think about *Minecraft*, do you think about the Ender Dragon or just living in its world and playing within its boundaries? If the world is rich enough and it offers enough discovery and possibility, you can just exist in the world and enjoy it. You play just to play. As you begin to see just how much there is to find and do in a good gaming universe, that really clicks into place.

In this respect, *No Man's Sky* is part of a wave of games that builds on sandbox experiences in a purer form. Murray reflects on another touchstone game as he explains his vision for a new form of triple-A experience. "*Red Dead Redemption* is a real favourite game of mine," he tells us. "I used to just go camping and stuff like that and it sounds ridiculous. Most people think there are triple-A games over *here* and then over *there* is this niche of PC gamers who enjoy games that are on Twitch and YouTube that none of us really understand. The kind of concept like *The Long Dark*: 'Not really sure why anyone plays it, but there's some kind of niche and they enjoy that and that's where it will stay'. I think there's this slow erosion taking place right now that's happening and people aren't really noticing. It's going to come crashing across triple-A, where I am sure we're going to see *Assassin's Creed* having much more sandbox-style play. That's something that I would be really excited about."

So what about *No Man's Sky* post launch? Having seen what the team has already achieved, it seems churlish to demand more, but the potential for further expansion is so clear and the references to *Minecraft* hint at future support. "There are things that we don't find core to the game, but we've obviously thought about," Murray reassures us. "And after the game comes out, once the core is out there and we have people out exploring there are things like that that we can potentially support that would be really fun. What we're trying to build is the base for the game."

And what of hopes for the game and how it will be received? Apart from everyone enjoying and coming to understand what it is that Hello Games has actually made, Duncan has a rather simple yet ambitious hope for the influence this game might have. "I remember reading a study on NASA scientists on what percentage of them had watched *Star Trek* when they were younger, and it was a ridiculously high stat," he begins. "My highest ambition is that at some point in the future, I want people, children now, to play *No Man's Sky* and be so enthralled by the experience that they make it their mission to go to Mars."

"Basically, I think the human race is pretty doomed on Earth right now, and really we need a generation to get us off this planet," laughs Duncan. "I see it as my mission."

ETA OCTOBER | PUB 2K GAMES | DEV HANGAR 13

Mafia III

Real crime in a virtual world



If you're after freedom in 'New Bordeaux' (read: New Orleans), one of your only options is that of 'la malavita', or the gang life.

That, friends, is a life of crime and corruption in a sullied city. Although, those that take up arms against Lincoln Clay in the battle for the streets, they have wilfully chosen to walk a dangerous path. And even his is a life ruled by the shotgun, his own freedom occasionally hindered at the whims of three lieutenants, each with an illicit, profitable fiefdom in the city. Organised crime is free to flourish, and the inhabitants of New Orleans – replicated here with only a little creative licence as New Bordeaux – at the tail-end of the tumultuous Sixties have seen their fair share of it.

Racism, violence and larceny ran unchecked through the streets, but the Big Easy had never known it to be any other way. While Italian mob boss Sal Marcano's empire began to crumble, it may have given rise to something far worse. Because when a balance of power is shifted, and tensions rise, it isn't long before a new force rises from the ashes of the old world and grasps that opportunity by the throat. *Mafia III* is based on the real world, so you've got to think about these Mafia factions, how they'd actually treat each other and how they would interact. We aren't pulling any punches, it's brutal and it's visceral; we aren't shying away from any of it, and that includes the racial issues of the time and the way the world reacts to violence," reveals Hangar 13's Andy Wilson.

Take one look at *Mafia III* in action and that attention to authenticity is clear. It's a violent and uncompromising take on an intense period of American history, far from the glamorisation of criminal enterprise often portrayed in genre games such as *Grand Theft Auto*. Of course, that approach presents its own potential pitfalls, ones that Hangar 13 is obviously keen to avoid. The result is a game that feels fresh, dangerous even, with the authenticity of the era enhancing the gameplay and building a believable narrative around its violent world.

"From the outset, we knew that the tone of *Mafia III* would be more hard-boiled than the tone of *Mafia II*, if only because we set the game in 1968, which was a very turbulent year in American history," says creative director Haden Blackman, echoing the sentiments of his executive producer.

"We felt that the tone of the game, the story, and even the gameplay had to be informed and influenced by the violence occurring all around the country and the world."

The violence that Blackman speaks of isn't on the edges of this culture and these characters; it's deeply rooted in the whole experience. In 1965, American troops stationed in Vietnam joined the anti-communist Southern forces in fighting the Northern communists, and the unexpectedly drawn-out war had a striking emotional and financial impact on the US itself, providing a window for opportunistic criminals to take advantage of a nation divided, gripped both by the fear of the spread of communism and the heavy military hand of the United States.

Closer to home, groups such as the Ku Klux Klan were attempting to establish white supremacy, violently fuelling racial tension. 1968 was a fiercely unpleasant era for several minority groups, and biracial war veteran Lincoln Clay was never going to have it easy. "When the game opens, it is 1968, in our fictionalised version of New Orleans [New Bordeaux]. Lincoln has just returned from a tour in Vietnam, and, through a favour to a friend, he has fallen in with the Black Mafia and found a sense of family he was always looking for – through a gangster that treats him like a brother," says Wilson, though as the Black mob is wiped out by the Italians, Clay is soon forced to return to war – albeit one on a different type of battlefield.

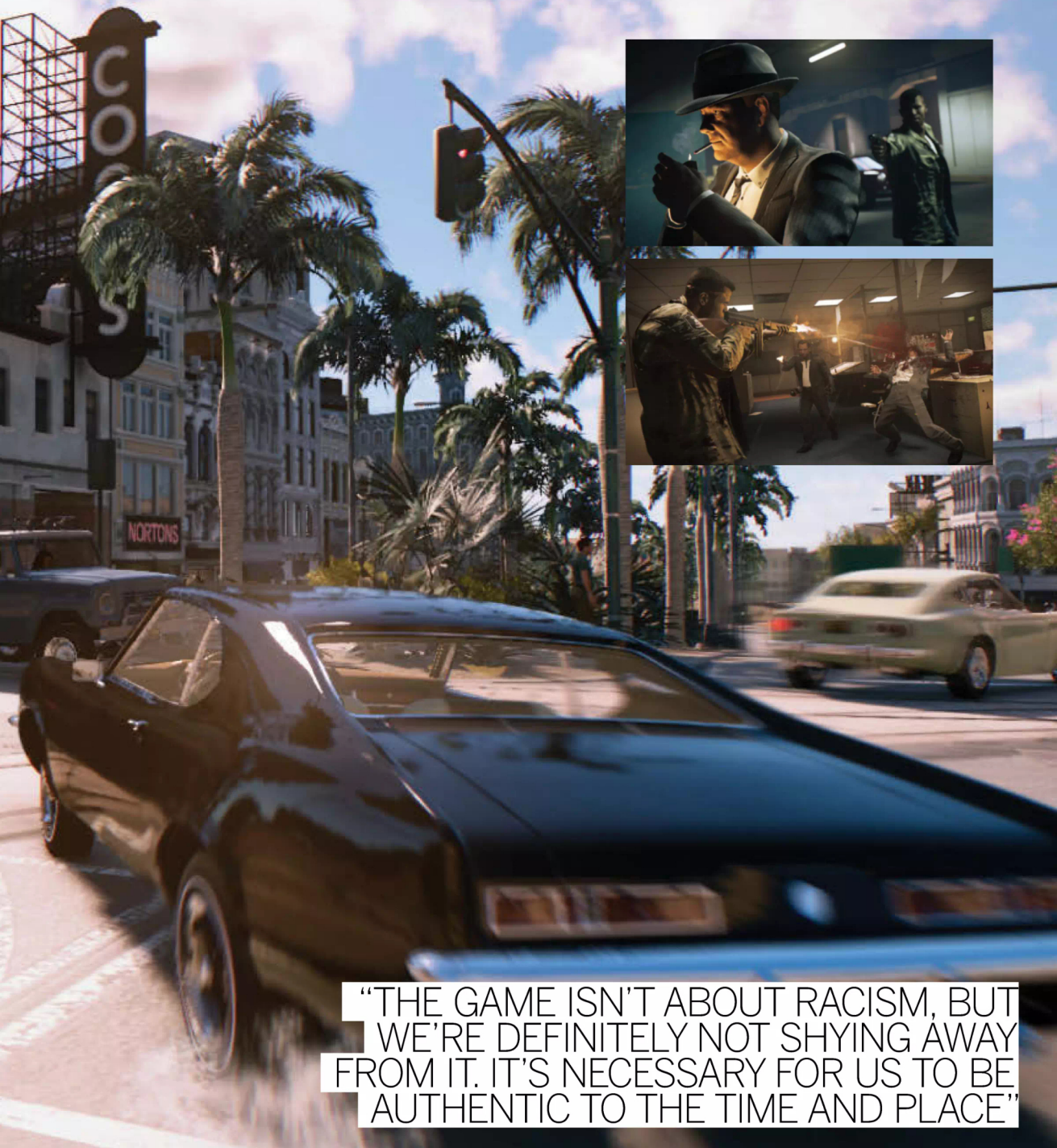
"We want to tell a compelling story about someone going to war with the Italian mob and then building his own mob in its place," says Blackman. "Given the time period and the location, we feel that having Lincoln be a member of the Black mob and a Vietnam veteran gives us a strong, complex, and interesting protagonist for the story we want to tell... it's about trying to find a place to belong, about revenge, greed and loyalty." The result is a world unlike any other. New Bordeaux is a mirror of the real New Orleans circa-1968, a vibrant reflection of true crime in a virtual world. It's the way in which narrative, setting and gameplay come together that will set *Mafia III* apart from the competition; an impressive expansion of the *Mafia* brand without diluting the mechanics of open-world action games that we've grown to appreciate.

"As with *Mafia II*, you can expect a strong sense of time and place and a compelling narrative.



WAGING WAR ON THE MOB

WHILE HANGAR 13 might be looking to produce an organic narrative experience in *Mafia III*, it does happen to feature familiar cover and shooting mechanics. The major difference being that Lincoln Clay is a retired war veteran, far more adept in combat than your traditional mobster or gangland soldier. This is reflected in Lincoln's sharp aim and brutal approach to dishing out violence in the swinging Sixties. "We wanted to highlight Lincoln's combat training, and show how that makes him better equipped to fight the mob," says Haden Blackman. *Mafia III*'s creative director. "It gives him an edge over these mob bullies he has taken on. So, we do have dozens of takedowns in the game, including a variety of stealth takedowns, 'normal' takedowns that dispatch a stunned or wounded enemy, and 'brutal' takedowns, which will cause other enemies to recoil, giving you a window for another attack."



"THE GAME ISN'T ABOUT RACISM, BUT WE'RE DEFINITELY NOT SHYING AWAY FROM IT. IT'S NECESSARY FOR US TO BE AUTHENTIC TO THE TIME AND PLACE"

But, this is also a continued evolution of the franchise. We're putting you into a world with its own criminal ecologies that you can tear down in many different ways, creating your own unique experience," says Blackman, confirming our suspicion that managing your very own criminal enterprise will be the feature that sets *Mafia* apart.

"While [Hangar 13] was drawn to the franchise because of its history of great narrative – we definitely feel that the core story is strong – we've also worked just as hard to make sure that the player feels as if they are part of driving that story forward," Blackman continues, asserting that he wants players to feel like they are co-authors of the overall experience. "We view the narrative as a series of tent pole moments, but how you get to each tent pole, and the decisions that you make as you progress, will often influence those moments, your relationships, and the outcome of the game."

It's an intriguing prospect, the ability to not only shape the progression of your story but also directly influence the fates of the characters

around you in an organic and unpredictable fashion. It's this freedom that has come to define many open-world RPGs, the likes of *The Witcher III: Wild Hunt* and *Mass Effect*, it was only a matter of time before it was pulled into the vicious backdrop of virtual crime and punishment.

Much like real conflict between mutual acquaintances, a lot of this is simmering away behind the scenes. As you push through the nine districts – from the iconic French district to the southern swamplands of the Bayou – you'll be tasked with asserting your dominance over the old Italian Mafia institution. You'll do this by blowing the lid off racketeering, drug, and prostitution rings; fighting low-level enforcers and doing your best to draw area mob bosses out into the open.

"The narrative itself is quite organic; it's not a left/right branch," says Wilson, reaffirming that the story builds in a similar fashion to that of the mission design, there are multiple approaches and outcomes to just about facet of *Mafia III*'s design.

"I'm particularly excited about the relationships

ONLY POSSIBLE THIS GENERATION

HANGAR 13 HAS produced its own engine to handle *Mafia III*, and the results are rather impressive. "Our proprietary engine has really allowed us to capture that sense of time and place," says *Mafia III*'s creative director Haden Blackman. "I think the art team has built a beautiful city with a diverse population and some striking set pieces, but none of that would render (especially when the player is driving at high speeds) without our engine, which has evolved alongside the new generation of consoles.

"Our tech is a combination of components from *Mafia II* that we have continued to develop over time, and new tech we've built from scratch for this game. Everything we do on the tech side is in the service of creating a rich world for the player to explore and supporting our core gameplay pillars."

"YOU CAN TRY TO SPREAD THE WEALTH AND KEEP EVERYONE CONTENT, BUT THERE WILL BE REWARDS YOU'LL NEVER ACQUIRE AS A RESULT"

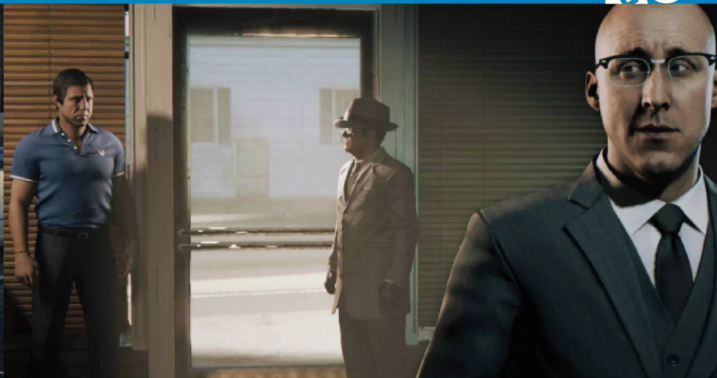


▲OXO *Mafia II* protagonist Vito Scaletta is one of your lieutenants; he's turned against the Italian mob after being forced out of Empire City. If you befriend him and generously dole out territories, he might just reveal what happened to him.



▲OXO You'll have the option of wire-tapping each sub-area of a district. This will not only grant you access to the enemy phone lines, but it'll also unlock Lincoln's 'Intel Vision' which shows what enemies and targets are in the area.

▲OXO *Mafia III* is actually framed as a documentary, with certain missions triggering cutscenes where we'll see a CIA operative – John Donovan – testifying to a government panel about Lincoln Clay's exploits.



△×□ Interrogating enemies can go one of two ways: get the information that you want and kill 'em in cold blood, or force them to work for you.

between Lincoln Clay and the three lieutenants he recruits, continues Blackman eagerly. "This not only ties back to the franchise's strength of story, but also directly defines your experience overall on a gameplay standpoint.

"Every time Lincoln takes over a criminal racket or a district run by the mob, he has an opportunity to assign it to one of his three underbosses: Cassandra, who runs the Haitian gang; Burke, who runs the Irish mob; and [star of *Mafia II*] Vito, who runs a rebel faction of the Italian mob," Blackman teases, "in exchange for being assigned a racket or district, these underbosses offer Lincoln special gameplay-relevant rewards."

This can have wide-reaching (and sometimes violent) consequences to the direction of your story, the outcome of certain characters and even affect the type of gear, weapons and abilities available. "If you start neglecting one character, you're going to start having problems with that character and that's going to have consequences down the line," says Wilson, though Blackman asserts that this isn't a punishment but a reality of the corner you've backed yourself into by trying to run your own criminal enterprise.

"There's no 'proper' way to manage your underbosses. If you want to invest everything in

Vito and let him run the city with you, that's your choice, your story. And it's a totally viable way to play with its own rewards. But, that does have consequences... you can probably imagine what a hardened criminal might do if they're passed over time and again," says Blackman, noting that your relationships with the lieutenants aren't monitored in-game, instead you'll need to look for changes in personality, attitude and communication – all three exist persistently in the world.

It's elements like this that really set *Mafia III* apart, that flip the traditional *Mafia* arc on its head, creating something vibrant and uncompromising in the process. This period has been under-explored in games, and the character of Lincoln Clay seems to be well considered. It's beautiful and brutal, organic and authentic, quite unlike anything we've seen from any generation of console. While Hangar 13 set out with clear development goals – "We want players to feel like stuntmen in Hollywood action films when engaging in car combat, we want players to feel as if they can play their own way, [and] we want you to feel like you own the battlefield as you progress through the game" – the strong focus on storytelling and characterisation, means *Mafia III* is coming together to be an unmissable experience.

LIFE ON MARS

We're still reeling from the disgusting cover of Bowie's *Space Oddity* used in the reveal trailer. Even if intended as a tribute, it just came across as cynical.

ETA NOVEMBER | DEV INFINITY WARD | PUB ACTIVISION

Call Of Duty: Infinite Warfare

There's an honesty to that title that you can't help but appreciate



In this age of social media feeds and cameras literally everywhere, it's impossible to keep secrets. Leaks are so common in modern gaming

that Sony's E3 showing last year wasn't just amazing because of the games in question – it was amazing that no South American rating board, downtrodden store worker or anonymous Reddit informant had managed to leak it all. Much to the surprise of nobody at all, then, this year's squeaky teenager pacifier was among the most recent casualties, even if nobody seemed to believe that Activision would be so foolhardy, so brazen to go with *that* title, or to risk eating into its own player base by releasing the new game alongside a remaster of *the best game in the series*. Amazingly, though, both are true.

There's more on the *Modern Warfare* remaster just over the page, however, freeing us up now to focus squarely on the new game, just like anyone who grabs the special edition won't be doing on launch day as they instead rinse *COD4* online. Unfair? Perhaps, although it *will* happen to a degree and this must be something Activision considered when planning the bundle, so there *must* be method to the madness.

Oh yeah, the new game. To be fair, *Infinite Warfare* is a better title than the more descriptive *Even More Modern Warfare*, but that's what it is. Going one small step further than *Black Ops* in terms of timeline, it seems as though nothing is off limits any more – fighting over areas of our own planet becomes futile when technology allows us to expand and consume from even further around us, and so humanity starts fighting over space instead. Yeah, that'll end well.

Still, for a series where the campaigns are known for their bombastic set-pieces, futuristic weapons and disregard for basic logic, the addition of robots and spaceships could make it the most OTT solo experience yet.

For those more interested in multiplayer though (which, according to the last census, is 'most people'), there's the risk that *COD* could be stumbling ever further from the accessibility and purity that made it a household name. We'd love to be proven wrong, mind – *Black Ops III*'s hi-tech warfare was some of the best in years, so there's hope for the future yet.

CALL OF DUTY: INFINITE WARFARE is being infinitely tweaked and polished by Infinity Ward. Spend infinite time looking for the website yourself – you'll find it eventually.

BLAST OFF

In the first footage, we see a ship take off from Earth and head into orbit, where it instantly dives into a huge dogfight. Nobody can say *COD* doesn't do spectacle well...

ALL IN YOUR HEAD

Helmet-mounted cameras and all kinds of other crazy AR tech will be used to augment your soldiers' abilities – just imagine how cool that would be in PlayStation VR.

FRICKIN' LASERS

It's currently unclear just how far the team will go with its future weapon tech. The crazier it gets, though, the harder it's going to be to keep multiplayer balanced.

ΔΟΧΔ While it hasn't gone super-sci-fi, *COD*'s latest time hop could still prove a leap too far for some shooter fans. And that, kids, is why *Battlefield* exists.

ETA NOVEMBER | PUB ACTIVISION | DEV RAVEN SOFTWARE | TWITTER @CALLOFDUTY

Modern Warfare Remastered

Vote with your wallet,
not your outrage

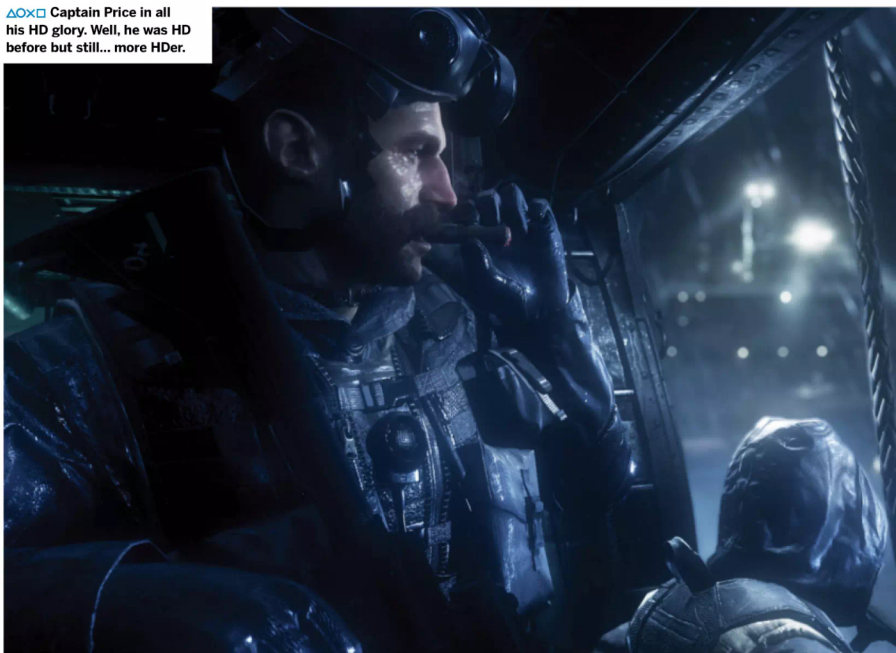


It's our ability to make decisions that truly makes us human. Whether you loathe or love Activision's decision to bundle *Modern Warfare Remastered* in with the upcoming *Call Of Duty: Infinite Warfare*, you, ultimately, are free to choose whether to purchase it or not.

The publisher has deigned to make the full HD remaster of *Call Of Duty 4* available to players who are willing to put down money for *Infinite Warfare*'s Legacy (£79.99), Legacy Pro (£109.99) and Digital Deluxe (£79.99) editions. The news has made plenty of keyboard analysts furious, the Internet aggressively asserting that the remaster should either be sold separately or canned entirely, paving the way for the unaltered 2007 release to be made available through PSN.

But don't let nostalgia viciously push a pistol to your temple and force you to pull out that debit card, because – whether you want to accept it or not – Activision certainly isn't. Sure, we love *Modern Warfare* as much as the next FPS fans. The game was a revelation, but whining about this isn't going to change

△×□ Captain Price in all his HD glory. Well, he was HD before but still... more HDer.



“WE LOVE MODERN WARFARE AS MUCH AS THE NEXT FPS FANS. THE GAME WAS A REVELATION”

the fact that Activision is a business first and a maker of games second. Businesses are inclined to make as much money as they can over a financial year, so why wouldn't one look to capitalise on a product so hotly requested, especially if it can be used to fuel sales of its new multi-million dollar endeavour? Supply and demand is king in the 21st century – three cheers for consumerism!

Do you believe that to be consumer-hostile or bad practice? Then tell Activision in the way that it will best understand: not with a hashtag or angry forum post, but with your wallet. *Call Of Duty* pre-order and sales figures have been in steady decline (*Black Ops III* did buck the trend a little, it must be said), so what sort of message do you think it's going to send if there's a sudden spike?

From what we've seen, *Modern Warfare Remastered* is looking great. It'll feature the full campaign and ten of the original 20 multiplayer maps with improved texture resolutions and a smoother 60fps, not to mention improvements to lighting, animations and audio (among other things). But that doesn't change the fact that if you're really that desperate to go back to the game that changed the FPS genre, then you still can. Nobody is stopping you. The servers are still live and your old copy of the game hasn't been destroyed overnight, so go enjoy yourself. You have a decision to make – just don't blame anybody else for it.

MODERN WARFARE REMASTERED is currently stuck in a training montage with Raven Software. Get involved here: callofduty.com



SHARE THIS



KILL CONFIRMED

Capture your best headshots

Returning to a time before loadouts and Killstreaks became bloated and ridiculous will be a genuine delight and when the purity of the gunplay is allowed to do all the hard work, there's much more room for showing off true skill. Jump online and assuming you're any good, we'll wager you'll have enough clips saved of your best kills for a compilation video in the first week.



△×□ Being excited to play a COD campaign is not a sensation we're used to.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

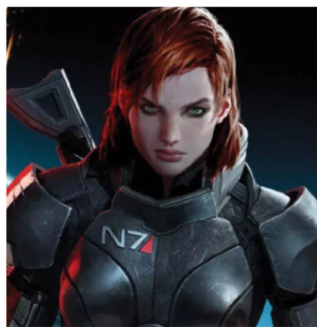
- △ It's sort of one of the best shooters ever made, so there's that.
- Two *Call Of Duty* games in a year will be music to the ears of diehard fans.
- × If it proves popular (which it will), we can probably expect additional map packs.
- It scrubs up surprisingly well for a game that's nearly a decade old.





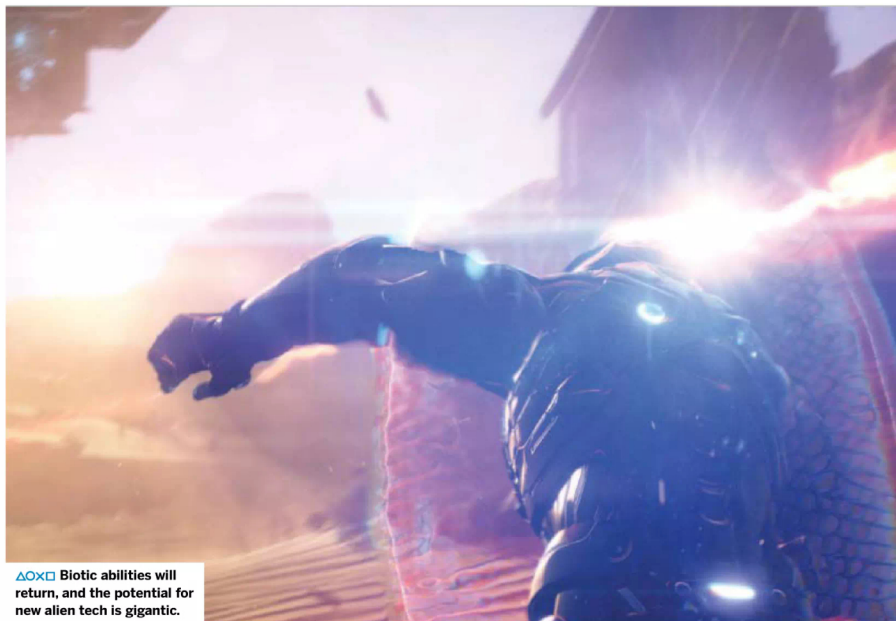
WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- ▲ A brand new setting could be just the shake-up the series needs.
- BioWare has a better understanding of how to end game after *you-know-what*.
- ✕ We'll need more morally loaded sci-fi once we're done with *Deus Ex: Human Revolution*.
- World-building in the original was amazing and now, we get to start over.



SHEPARD'S FINAL HEARTFELT WORDS

"WE ARE TRAVELLERS, constantly moving forward and looking back. Alone and as one, we have no choice but to try. For our insatiable curiosity, for our fear of what should happen if we don't. You are that explorer now; we will say goodbye, and you will look back one last time. Just know that wherever you go, we will be with you. This is Commander Shepard, signing off."



ΔOX□ Biotic abilities will return, and the potential for new alien tech is gigantic.

ETA Q2 2017 | PUB EA | DEV BIOWARE | TWITTER @BIOWARE

Mass Effect: Andromeda

Scanning for new intel, Commander



Commander Shepard had to make some tough decisions during the events of the original *Mass Effect* trilogy.

From wiping out entire species, to toppling sovereignties; chemically castrating a race through inaction, and too often steering the crew of the *Normandy* into deadly peril, it was a torturous journey. But Shepard isn't to blame, not really, because it was *us* controlling the Commander's actions from a sofa all along – we were the comfortable puppet masters of galactic-wide death and destruction.

BioWare has been training us over a decade of play to make the difficult decisions, an integral quality as we prepare to invade the Andromeda galaxy in the 2017 sequel. While this is going off admittedly unconfirmed information, we are fairly confident we can believe it.

Publishers have this tendency to accidentally reveal a ton of information about its upcoming games in marketing surveys. And so we're able to get a small insight into what's to follow,

connecting the dots by sifting through everything from emotional Commander Shepard speeches to mountains of N7 Day concept art and teasers.

"*Mass Effect: Andromeda* takes players to the Andromeda galaxy, far beyond the Milky Way, where players will lead the fight for a new home in hostile territory – where we are the aliens – opposed by a deadly indigenous race bent on stopping us... this is the story of humanity's next chapter, and player choices throughout the game will ultimately determine our survival in the Andromeda Galaxy."

In essence, *Mass Effect: Andromeda* sounds like a hostile take on *Star Trek*. From what we can piece together, Shepard – at some point during the events of *Mass Effect 3* – sent a new crew to... well, you know: "explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life and new civilizations, to boldly go where no man has gone before."

Where *Andromeda* will differ from previous *Mass Effect* games, however (aside from allowing us to explore a "seamless open-world galaxy") is that it's making us the enemy. We are

arriving in a brand new galaxy as an unknown, hostile species; the last remnants of humanity fighting to colonise planets and ensure the continuation of the race at all costs.

Of course, whether BioWare actually has the confidence to set a new trilogy around us being the scourge of the universe, or whether it tries to frame it around a holier-than-thou motivation, remains to be seen, but we're excited to find out. Especially as we cast our eyes over another leaked screen; marketing speak or the plot for one of the most exciting games of 2017?

"There is a major battle brewing, and it awaits you," it reads. "It is unfolding across a galaxy of planets, with creatures and species entirely unknown. Draw your weapon, because the fight is bigger than you thought. It's not just for your own life, it's for all of humanity – the ultimate battle for a place we can all call home."

MASS EFFECT: ANDROMEDA is swaying between *Paragon* and *Renegade* over at BioWare. Follow its progress here: bioware.com

 BioWare has implied that we won't see many familiar races or faces in *Andromeda*, with the studio designing a whole new suite of interesting creatures to meet.



"PLAYERS WILL LEAD THE FIGHT FOR A NEW HOME IN HOSTILE TERRITORY"

COSMIC SPACEHEAD

Creature design is absolutely out of this world, so every new beast you encounter will present new challenges and, of course, new tech to repurpose as your own.

ETA 2016 | DEV GUERRILLAGAMES | PUB SONY | TWITTER @PLAYSTATION

Horizon Zero Dawn

The hunt for the next big PS4 exclusive is on. Meet the front runner...



While it seems as though hunting mechanics are the current flavour of the month in gaming, *Horizon's* twist makes it all feel fresh.

Mammoths, saber-toothed tigers and dinosaurs are all well and good, but the reason we enjoy *Monster Hunter* so much is the element of mystery and learning that comes from dealing with original creatures. You might get caught out by a tricky new attack the first few times, but give it a few runs and you'll soon work out ways to turn even the most dangerous moves against their senders with a little skill.

It certainly helps that Guerrilla's unique blends of nature and technology are beautifully designed beasts, with every visible cable, gear or circuit where it is for a reason... and this means they too can be exploited. Sever a crucial fuel line, for instance, and you might hinder a larger creature's movements, while even their weapons can be sabotaged and detached for your own use, so long as you know what you're aiming for.

We're no strangers to that *Monster Hunter* loop of hacking chunks off enemies for our own gain, but shifting that into an open world

setting will be the real game-changer – the tracking aspect is minimal in Capcom's hunts but here, it could play a real part. Giant tracks could lead you to one of those huge Enterprise-headed brontosaurus with smaller creatures seeking safety in its shadow perhaps, or a trail of destruction may lead to a larger predator for you to avoid or confront as the situation dictates. The potential here is huge, but that's also our primary concern at this point.

Guerrilla's experience to date has involved pushing visuals to the limit by using linearity as a crutch. Outside of a few areas of *Shadow Fall*, it's mostly been A-to-B shooting, making us wonder just how well the team will be able to adapt to not only a new genre but also an entirely new approach to game design. It already looks the part, so that's one box ticked (albeit one Guerrilla has never been known to leave unchecked), but it won't be until we really get stuck in that we'll really see just how well the studio has managed to broaden its horizons...

HORIZON ZERO DAWN is being pieced together from bits of old robosaurs by Guerrilla Games. Find out more here: guerrilla-games.com

KEEP AN EYE OUT

Watchers don't pose much of a threat alone, but their ability to effectively raise an alarm when startled can alert more dangerous beasts. You don't want that.

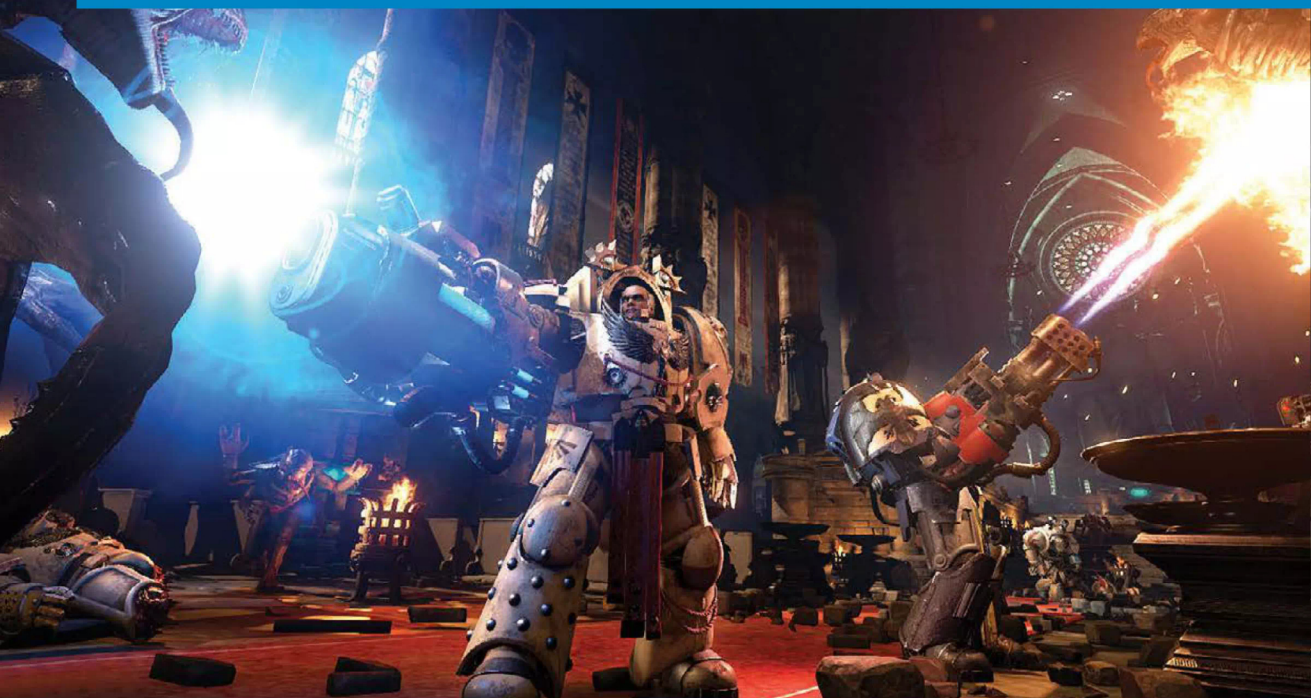
HAIR-RAISING

When this generation began, hoods and hats were everywhere. Realistic hair is pretty power-hungry, hence why we're only now seeing games get it right.

WELL EQUIPPED

Aloy is a dab hand with a bow, but she's also smart with using enemy tech against them. Scavenging and crafting will be key in improving your arsenal.

ΔΟΧΔ After the graphical showcase of *Uncharted 4*, *Horizon* will almost certainly be the next game to make your PS4 worry that it might melt. It looks so damn good.



ETA 2016

PUB FOCUS INTERACTIVE

DEV STEAM ON STUDIO / CYANIDE

TWITTER @SPACEHULKFPS

Space Hulk: Deathwing

Purging the scum of the universe



In the grim darkness of the far future, there is only war. Well, that's not quite true. There are also a lot of locked and lockable doors. This is a major coup for people living in far future,

as war has no idea what to do about locked doors. With a big enough cupboard and a sturdy padlock, we could probably do away with war altogether. But then Games Workshop would have to change the tagline for *Warhammer 40,000* to 'in the safe and secure utopia of the far future, nothing is wrong but don't open the cupboard'. Which would be rubbish.

'War' in this analogy means aliens, specifically the ones that are hunting you and your squad of heavily armoured Deathwing Terminators (think of a massive fridge, but with machine guns and space hammers instead of a vegetable drawer) through the titular Space Hulks. For the glory of far future Imperium of Man, you and your squadmates are tasked with raiding these gargantuan derelict ships for Relics and uncovering a dark truth (everything in the future is dark) about the history of the Deathwing and its associated chapter of Space Marines, the Dark (see?) Angels.

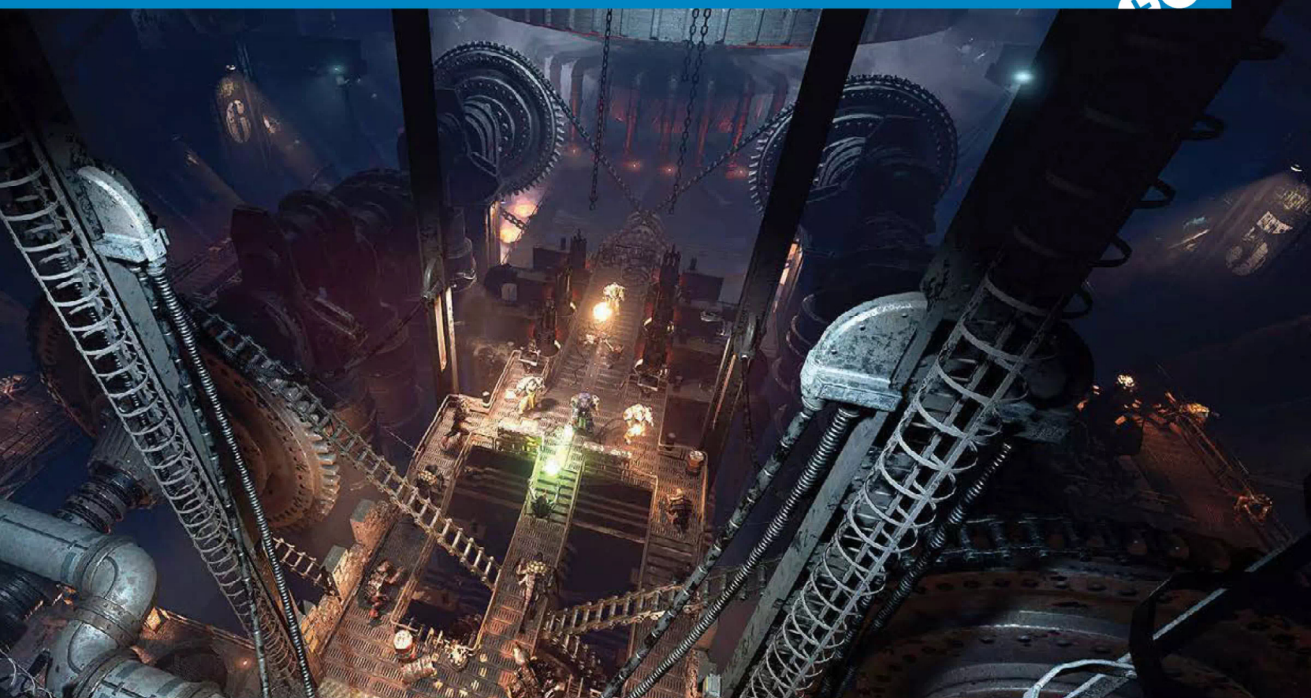
At least, that's the reason we're given as we watch the three Deathwing squad members stomp around

the wreck of a gloomy spaceship, cutting their way through swarms of shrieking monsters. The toothier inhabitants of this derelict are Genestealers – fast, bipedal xenomorphs that scamper along the ship's tight corridors or clamber up onto gangways to go at the squad with indecently large claws.

In the gameplay we see, they're no match for the Terminators, who have everything from the *40K* arsenal to swat them away with, from Assault Cannons to Heavy Flamers to Lightning Claws. Unfortunately, they're also (though hopefully only in this early stage of development) quite dim – preferring to charge noisily in straight lines with howling faces positioned conveniently at bullet-level. Less Ridley Scott, more Rick and Morty.

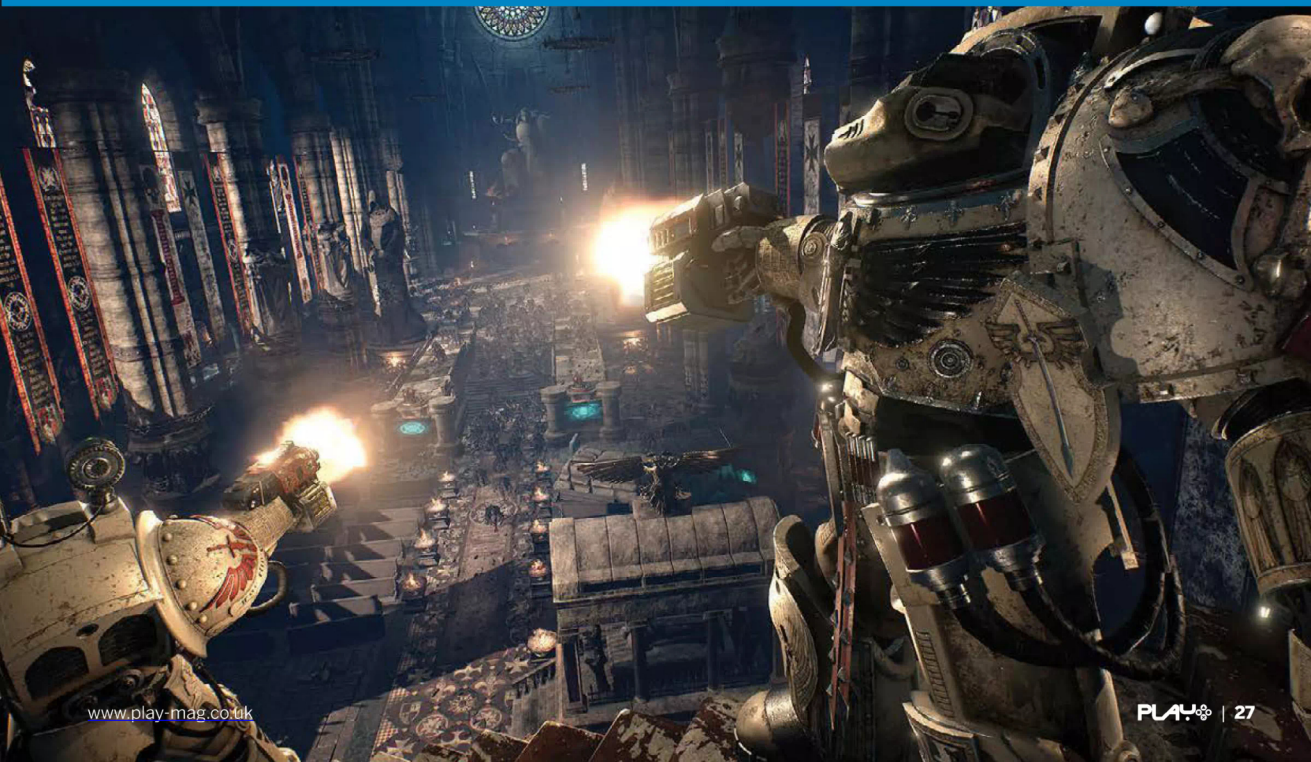
And we say hopefully because at the centre of *Space Hulk*, there's quite a cool mechanic: those lockable doors we mentioned. While in the demo the Terminators had all their weapons unlocked, in the game proper there will reportedly be a real risk of getting swarmed. The way to counter this is to look at your in-game map, make note of how the corridors connect and which doors you can seal off, then strategically funnel the tide of teeth and chitin into areas where you can more efficiently mulch them. Think of the turret set-up scenes in *Aliens* laid on top of *Doom*, and you're somewhere in the ballpark. That's the level of action and chaos against a dark and dank backdrop *Space Hulk* is aiming for and so far, it's impressive.

“THE CHANCE TO EXPERIENCE
A DESPERATE BATTLE AGAINST
GENESTEALERS IN THE
CLAUSTROPHOBIC TUNNELS
OF A SPACE HULK”



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

-  The *Warhammer 40K* lore is a rich source from which to draw inspiration.
-  First-person shooters with brains are few and far between, so this is welcome.
-  An awesome array of OP weapons with which to turn aliens into mush.
-  The board game is amazing and this looks like it could do it justice.



POWER GLOVE

Are Ignis' sparkly gloves just an odd choice of accessory, or could they be more? Some of our number suspect they might be linked to his magical abilities...

DRESSED TO KILL

Want to dress like Noct and the guys? You're in luck – a real clothing line will accompany the game. Will it ever leave Japan? Probably not, but we can dream.

GAMECEPTION

Justice Monsters is a strange pinball-meets-RPG game the gang seems to love. It'll be playable in-game, as well as in real life via a standalone mobile app.

△×□ Seeing the party enjoy a little downtime makes a refreshing change after so many RPGs where all they seem to do together is grind out experience.



LIGHT 'EM UP

Platinum Demo showed off just how well FFXV's engine can do lighting, and it's even more apparent and impressive in realistic settings like this diner.

ETA 30 SEPTEMBER

DEV SQUARE ENIX

PUB IN-HOUSE

Final Fantasy XV

The road trip of a lifetime rumbles ever closer, and we're ready



Okay, Square Enix, it worked – maybe not for the reasons you hoped or expected, but *Platinum Demo* got us incredibly

excited for *Final Fantasy XV*. There wasn't just one reason, actually, but a bunch, so let's break it down real quick.

First up, let's talk about the unmistakable influence of the *Kingdom Hearts* games on FF's action-heavy evolution. As big fans of Sora's key-swinging antics, we picked up young Noctis' similarly tactile combat almost instantly – it's a little different to how it was in the *Episode Duscae* demo, but having real time weapon switching (rather than each weapon tied to context-specific attack types) adds a decent degree of depth. Not that you'd know if you don't like to experiment, mind. For all the improvements to combat since the last demo, Square was surprisingly coy about providing tool tips or tutorials on how to get the most out of the new battle system.

This all leads us onto our next point – the fact that *Platinum* already shows just how much the team has been listening to and implementing

feedback since the *Duscae* demo dropped.

Loads of changes, significant and minor, hint at a much more well-rounded end product, especially if Square is planning to have player critiques of *Platinum* feed into the final game as well.

Knowing that *Platinum* stands alone and won't be a part of *XV* proper is also a big part of it, since we've had enough of furry creatures talking in emojis to last us a lifetime already. That it hints at more playful elements in what so far has been sold as a fairly serious game is fine, par for the course, even – VII stars a cat riding a stuffed toy, *X's* coming apocalypse apparently isn't important enough to miss a big Blitzball game for and magical flying cat things are a staple of the series, kupo. We're up for some silliness... just maybe not *that* kind.

It was the tech that won us over in the end, though, and offering weather and lighting effects at the touch of a button would suggest that Square knew that. The tech demo is out of the way, then – let's just get ready to hit the road.

FINAL FANTASY XV is being tuned up in the garage ready for its impending epic road trip. Keep an eye on its progress here: finalfantasyxv.com

ETA 28 JUNE | PUB WARNER BROS.
DEV TT FUSION | TWITTER @TTGAMES

Lego Star Wars: The Force Awakens

Putting the new trilogy together one piece at a time



ALSO COMING TO PS3

Lego games feel like they are up there with death and taxes in the pantheon of Stuff That Will Happen, a fact that's hammered home at the beginning of our preview presentation as we are told it's been 11 years since the first *Lego Star Wars* game. A lot has changed in the games industry in 11 years but it can sometimes feel like we're playing the same *Lego* game over and over. Most likely because we are. Still, this is something developer TT Fusion is acutely aware of and wants to address with *Lego Star Wars: The Force Awakens*.

"We really want this to be the best *Lego* game ever," says Tim Wileman, associate producer at TT Games, "creating an authentic

the holy grail and something I think with this game we've got closer than any of our previous games," Wileman says. But puzzle-solving isn't the only innovation *The Force Awakens* has: combat has updated systems as well, namely with Blaster Battles. These set-pieces pop up during levels, and see the player facing down large enemy groups from behind cover. Even flight combat has been given an overhaul: a combination of linear, blasts of dogfighting and some open sections, which are particularly enjoyable.

Graphically, *The Force Awakens* Lego form is a treat, with a ton of extra details, jokes and references that *Star Wars* fans will love. Not only that, but key voices from the film – like Daisy Ridley as Rey – have recorded new lines for the game, while over

"THE FRESHEST GAME IN TERMS OF NEW FEATURES AND NEW GAMEPLAY OPPORTUNITIES"

Lego Star Wars game that stays faithful to the source material but at the same time is the freshest game in terms of new features and gameplay opportunities." For a series which has had the same 'press Circle to solve puzzle' system for years now, this is nice to hear. Enter the new Multi-Build system: rather than smashing Lego bricks and being presented with a build which has been conceived by a designer as the solution to a puzzle, you are given up to three options of what to build. These might be used by yet-to-be unlocked characters or just to do something fun. "We've also got the customiser," Wileman elaborates. "Players can unlock characters, go to a special location in the hub, pull them apart and put them back together in cool ways."

"It's about mirroring what kids do in real life," says Wileman, "trying to replicate the tactility of Lego and how kids interact with it." This has always been a core problem for the *Lego* games – how do you keep the spirit of Lego, while at the same time presenting a fun and linear game experience? "That's

200 unlockable characters join the roster from all over the canon. "We've included all the core characters from *Episode VII*," Wileman explains. "The team has really gone to town bringing them to life in terms of how they are animated and how they control. We've also borrowed heavily from *Episodes I-VI* and a few other side stories that will come as a pleasant surprise to fans.

"These stories take place leading up to *Episode VII*," Wileman says. "Working closely with Lucasfilm has helped shape these levels." That's not all though, as Wileman explains: "Some of it's going to be stuff that only really seasoned *Star Wars* fans are going to get, and that's really cool." All of this points to a bigger, more innovative *Lego* game than we have seen before; the ultimate package for *Star Wars* fans new and old, and a genuine step forward for the 11-year-old series. Frankly, it's about time.

LEGO STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS is too long a title for us to fit anything useful in this space, so here's a website: ttgames.com



Each character plays differently, with Rey acting as an athletic character and Finn going for the brute force approach, for example.



HUB WORLDS

LEGO games have made increasingly better use of their hub worlds in order to drag you deeper in to the world they are trying to recreate. *LEGO Marvel Super Heroes* had its version of Manhattan and *LEGO Lord Of The Rings* had amazing sections of Middle-earth. TT Fusion is building on this with *LEGO Star Wars: The Force Awakens*. There are a total of five hubs in this game, which will have you exploring Jakku, Takodana, Star Killer Base, D'Qar and the interior of the Millennium Falcon. These spaces will be packed with familiar sights, sounds and characters that fans of *Star Wars* will love and from a gameplay standpoint, there will be all sorts of hidden collectibles.

△×□ Classic characters from across the series will all play differently thanks to TT Fusion's commitment to the details. This, combined with the Multi-Build system, will only enhance the replayability that is key to the *LEGO* series.



PREVIEW

A quick look at some of the other awesome games that are just around the corner

1 GRAND KINGDOM

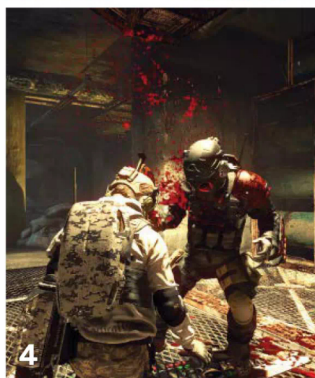
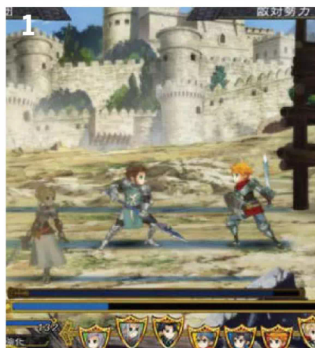
FORMAT: PS4, VITA
RELEASE DATE: JUNE

A TACTICAL RPG adventure from NIS America that launched in Japan back in November, *Grand Kingdom* arrives on UK shores at the end of June. In an age of battle, it isn't just honourable knights that fight for their kingdoms, but hired mercenaries putting their lives on the line for the promise of gold, and it's up to you to put together a crack team of warriors and jump into the fray. Or take the Four Great Nations for as much cash as they'll give you. Sporting fast-paced action and strategic planning, as well as a meaty character creation system and varied customisation options, *Grand Kingdom* will release in a special limited edition that features a gorgeous 128-page art book, poster, soundtrack and transparent decals. Cross-play for the under-loved Vita will also be supported. Hooray!

2 PROJECT ELEA

FORMAT: PS4
RELEASE DATE: Q3 2016

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING a little more contemplative? Something to get your intellectual teeth into? *Project Elea*, a first-person sci-fi storytelling adventure/walking simulator, has caught our attention with an intriguing trailer showing the story of a woman who wakes up in a locked cabin on board the Worldtree-class starship Pilgrimage II in deep space. Players will need to battle an invasive intelligence to save the ship and uncover the truth behind what happened to the Pilgrimage and its crew. But this isn't looking to be just your typical 'spooky things happen in space' scenario; *Project Elea* is looking to explore the nature of AI, human intelligence, and what it means to have faith. Pegged for release on multiple platforms later in the year, *Project Elea* is definitely worth keeping a close eye on.



3 MANUAL SAMUEL

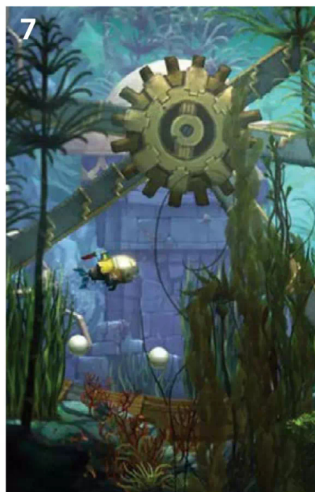
FORMAT: PS4
RELEASE DATE: Q2 2016

IF YOU WERE given the choice by a sadistic Grim Reaper type, would you rather live for 24 hours or spend an eternity in hell? Ah, but wait, before you answer, there's a caveat: if you decide to take the 24 hours, you'll need to control your every action. And when we say every action, we mean it – this includes having to move limbs independently of one another and controlling your own breathing. This can then make even the smallest tasks, such as getting dressed or going to the bathroom, turn into a rather unfortunate series of events, *Octodad* style. And that's *Manual Samuel* for you; described by its creators as 'Monkey Island meets QWOP', it's a bizarre adventure game wrapped in insane rag doll physics.

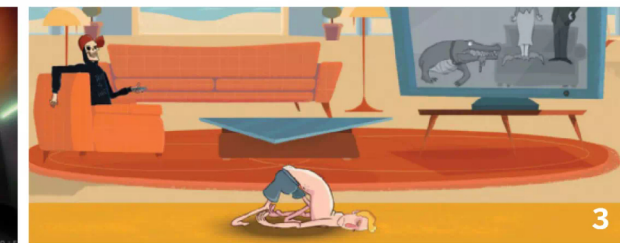
4 UMBRELLA CORPS

FORMAT: PS4
RELEASE DATE: Q2 2016

THE LAST TIME Capcom attempted to develop a third-person multiplayer shooter in the *Resident Evil* universe it stank like a decade-old corpse. The Japanese publisher is attempting to rectify that with *Umbrella Corps*, a competitive shooter with multiplayer modes and maps culled from the likes of *Resident Evil 4* and *Resident Evil 5*. There's a single-player campaign in here too, of sorts, but it's essentially a series of horde-based missions. *Umbrella Corps* has already been delayed from its May release date, but to be honest, we're not treating that as a bad thing; we'd much rather wait for a game we can really get our teeth into than have to endure another *Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City*.



ROUNDUP



3



5



6



8

5 BLOOD ALLOY: REBORN

FORMAT: PS4

RELEASE DATE: Q4 2016

SEE? NOT ALL failed Kickstarter projects end in tears and recrimination. Some of them go on to look like pretty damn fun platform slasher games. Inspired by the likes of *Metroid* and *Dark Souls* – you have our attention already, Suppressive Fire Studios – *Blood Alloy: Reborn* is the product of a failed campaign that inspired the development team to go back to the drawing board. The current iteration – looking a hell of a lot like an updated *Strider*, which is no bad thing – has been boiled down to its purest gameplay form with reworked art and design, and with a much smaller scale game is now in the works compared to original concept. The team is promising a finished product by the time 2016 comes to a close.

7 SONG OF THE DEEP

FORMAT: PS4

RELEASE DATE: Q2 2016

EVERY GENRE HAS its waves of influence, and it looks like the Metrodvania is making something of a comeback. *Song Of The Deep* is developer Insomniac Games' take on the genre, a colourful and charming side-scrolling adventure that casts you as Merryn, a girl on a journey to find her father, a fisherman lost at sea. It's looking rather beautiful, and we love the fact that this is clearly a passion project, inspired as it was by Insomniac's chief creative officer's daughter. The nippy narrative is strengthened by a vast underwater world made up of sunken cities and tricky puzzles, and we're absolutely on board with that. More creative experiments from big devs, please.

6 VISAGE

FORMAT: PS4

RELEASE DATE: Q1 2017

AH, PT. YOU had already given us so much in the way of nightmarish horror and ghoulishly fascinating unpleasantness. We wish you were still a thing, although we're fairly surprised that we haven't seen a wave of spooky house experiences eager to fill that gap. Still, there is at least one on the way. Taking a good dose of inspiration from our favourite creepy game that never was, *Visage* is developer Sad Square's ode to the haunted house genre. Trapped inside an old house in the Eighties, you're thrust into an unnerving scenario and tasked with exploring gloomy corridors and abandoned rooms. It's nothing new in concept, of course, but *PT* showed us unequivocally that this sort of horror experience still has a hell of a lot to offer, and if *Visage* can deliver, we'll be happy (if terrified) bunnies.

8 THE TECHNOMANCER

FORMAT: PS4

RELEASE DATE: Q4 2016

SPIDERS' FIRST FORAY into new-generation gaming, *Bound By Flame*, was rather hit-and-miss at the best of times, so it's no surprise that the developer has decided to step away from traditional sword and sorcery fare with *The Technomancer*. A futuristic RPG set in a post-apocalyptic world decimated by an event known as the War of Water, *The Technomancer* will feature plenty of familiar RPG elements, including quests (according to the developer, around four times as many as *Bound By Flame*), skill trees, crafting, and a host of level-upable companions. With a narrative that unfurls on Mars and some slick combat mechanics, we're expecting interesting things from Spiders' second stab at a current-gen RPG.

PLAYSTATION VR

IS IT REALLY THE NEXT BIG THING?

YOUR SHOUT
Play readers have their say

 **twitter**
twitter.com/PlayMag_UK

PlayStation HOME was more Better than VR! Heck PlayStation TV was 10x Better than this VR crap!!!
@70DCS

I wanna see some SWORD ART ONLINE type shit PlayStation don't let us down #bringit
@CHAUNCEYRUDOLP1

@PlayStation Please ramp up the public demos before release, there's nothing like trying before buying, especially for VR!
@J_BRANCHET

Now it's just needs the games... And we might see the true rise of VR gaming, and could be a historical moment in gaming.
@BITTERBGAVIN

Must say; I'm quite happy I have a PS4 camera and a PS Move lying about right now.
@DUNKOLOGY

Playstation VR is asking so many questions that are going to be central for games moving forwards.
@JAKE_EBOOKS

 **facebook**
facebook.com/PlayMagUK

This whole thing screams fad to me. One day, when there is Star Trek style VR, I'll invest my time and money into that. This is just a monitor for the head...
STEVEN NORRIS

They used to warn us to sit a good distance from the tv when playing. Now they want us to strap the f***in thing to our faces. Gewddemnit.
JOHN MURRAY

I'm a PlayStation guy but sorry this is pointless.
AMAN SINGH DADIAHLA

I'm going to sit in bath of Sony branded truffles and bulgar caviar, it's only money Sony take it all, I don't want it.
GAZ TAYLOR

Sorry but no thanks. I bought your Move, your Wonderbook and the Vita. How long before you abandon this piece of hardware? No Sale PlayStation.
COLIN TUNSTALL

Ill wait to see what games will be revealed at e3 before pre ordering this. I will definitely pick this up though
DANIEL HORKAN

 **YouTube**
youtube.com/PlayMagUK

Gotta hand it to Sony, they sure to know how to design some slick looking hardware!!
BLIGLUM

It's only a matter of time that you can plug into your video games like the matrix.
THIRTIESGUY

i want to experience VR to improve my gaming life and make enter a whole new world gaming fantasy.
ZEROTHESOLDIERX

Want my money for psvr? I need 3 games on it...no mans sky, rigs and gran Turismo...and you'll have my cash.
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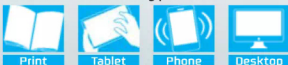


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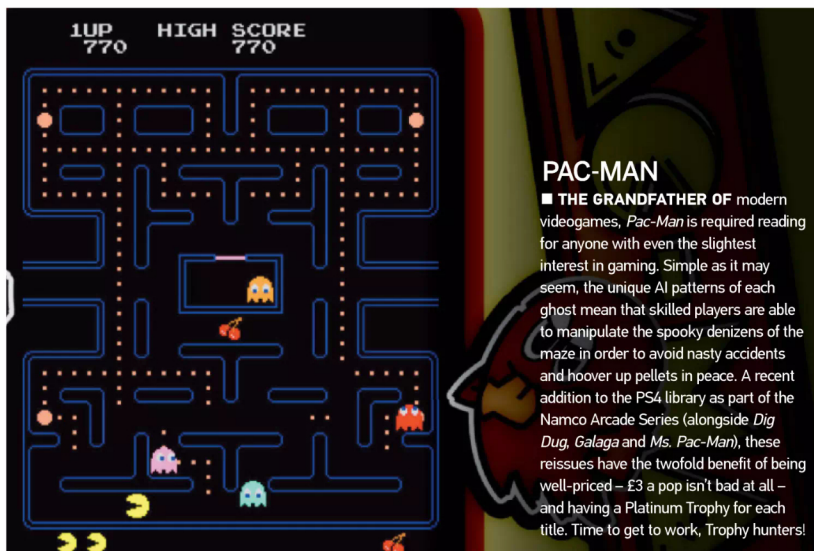
★★★★★ TEN OF THE BEST ★★★★★ PS4 CLASSICS

IN THE MOOD FOR SOMETHING RETRO ON PS4? CHECK THESE OUT...



FINAL FANTASY VII

■ **REVERED BY MANY** as the greatest JRPG of them all, Cloud's epic adventure is finally available on PS4. Sure, it's basically just the PC port (so slightly better models and some trainers to make the game more user-friendly) but with Square's proper remake on the way, this is easily the best way to experience the classic story – rumour has it that the remake may not stick firmly to the events of the original.



PAC-MAN

■ **THE GRANDFATHER OF** modern videogames, *Pac-Man* is required reading for anyone with even the slightest interest in gaming. Simple as it may seem, the unique AI patterns of each ghost mean that skilled players are able to manipulate the spooky denizens of the maze in order to avoid nasty accidents and Hoover up pellets in peace. A recent addition to the PS4 library as part of the Namco Arcade Series (alongside *Dig Dug*, *Galaga* and *Ms. Pac-Man*), these reissues have the twofold benefit of being well-priced – £3 a pop isn't bad at all – and having a Platinum Trophy for each title. Time to get to work, Trophy hunters!



GRADIUS

■ **IF YOU ENJOY** modern shooters like *Resogun*, you owe it to yourself to check out where the genre began. While Housemarque's game is actually closer to *Defender*, that's not on PS4 whereas this awesome side-scrolling

Konami shooter is. With wonderful music and a unique power-up system that lets you pick how you improve your ship as you progress, it's a true classic. If you'd rather something newer, *Gradius V* is available on PS3 and it's superb.



PARAPPA THE RAPPER 2

■ **WE'LL TAKE ANY** excuse we can get to talk about how much we love PaRappa, and the recent remaster of the PS2 sequel gives us a chance to do just that. Stages aren't quite as memorable as in the original in general but there are some excellent ones all the same, plus the improved scoring system grants the game greater longevity than its predecessor.



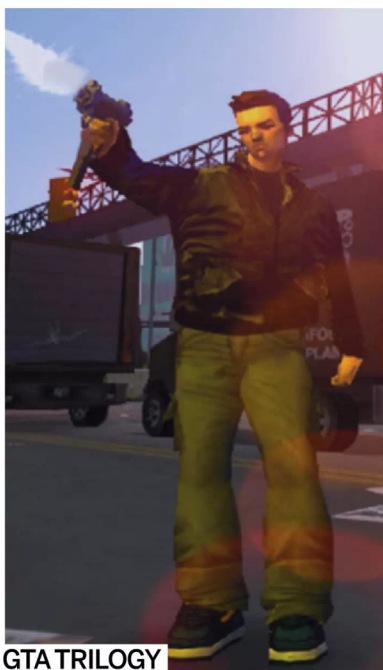
METAL SLUG 3

■ **FEW DEVELOPERS DO** pixel art as well as SNK did back in the day – whether in games like *Garou* or this beloved shooter series, the sprites just leap off the screen thanks to outstanding design and animation. Originally designed to guzzle coins in arcades, the *Metal Slug* games are ruthless in their difficulty, so it's nice to be able to sit down at home and actually reach the end... even if you do end up dying thousands of times in the process. One of the highlights of the series, this is side-scrolling shooting at its best and some of the screen-filling bosses have to be seen to be believed.



BUBBLE BOBBLE

■ **THERE'S A REASON** for Taito's single-screen bubble-blowing arcade game making it into so many Greatest Games Of All Time lists – it's absolutely timeless. While its two-button setup makes it dead easy to pick up and play, experts will show off their ability to bounce on bubbles or only pop specific ones with their spikes, leading to all kinds of advanced tricks. It's also one of the few old-school greats that has never been bettered – *Pac-Man Championship Edition* and *Galaga Legions* are so good that they almost make the originals obsolete, but *Bubble Bobble's* sequels just haven't recaptured the magic.



GTA TRILOGY

■ **WHILE THEY MIGHT** be wildly outclassed by the superb *Grand Theft Auto V* by modern standards, going back to the PS2 games does feel almost like going home. Whether it's the authentic Eighties glow and hum of *Vice City*, the sprawling map of *San Andreas* or the sheer significance of *III* on the industry as a whole, each has its own reasons for continued relevance despite how far the franchise has come. The addition of Trophies and slightly updated visuals are both welcome but even without all that, gaming sandboxes don't come much better than in *GTA* games, no matter how old.



ANOTHER WORLD

■ **MIND-BLOWING AT THE** time, this stylish and beautifully animated platform adventure serves as a poignant example of just how far gaming has come – this was once as cutting edge as *Uncharted 4* is today. It still holds up relatively well, frustrating as it can be compared to its more accessible modern peers, but it's not the sort of thing anyone is going to buy on a whim. If you're buying into it, you're doing so for the nostalgia hit, and that's exactly what you get.



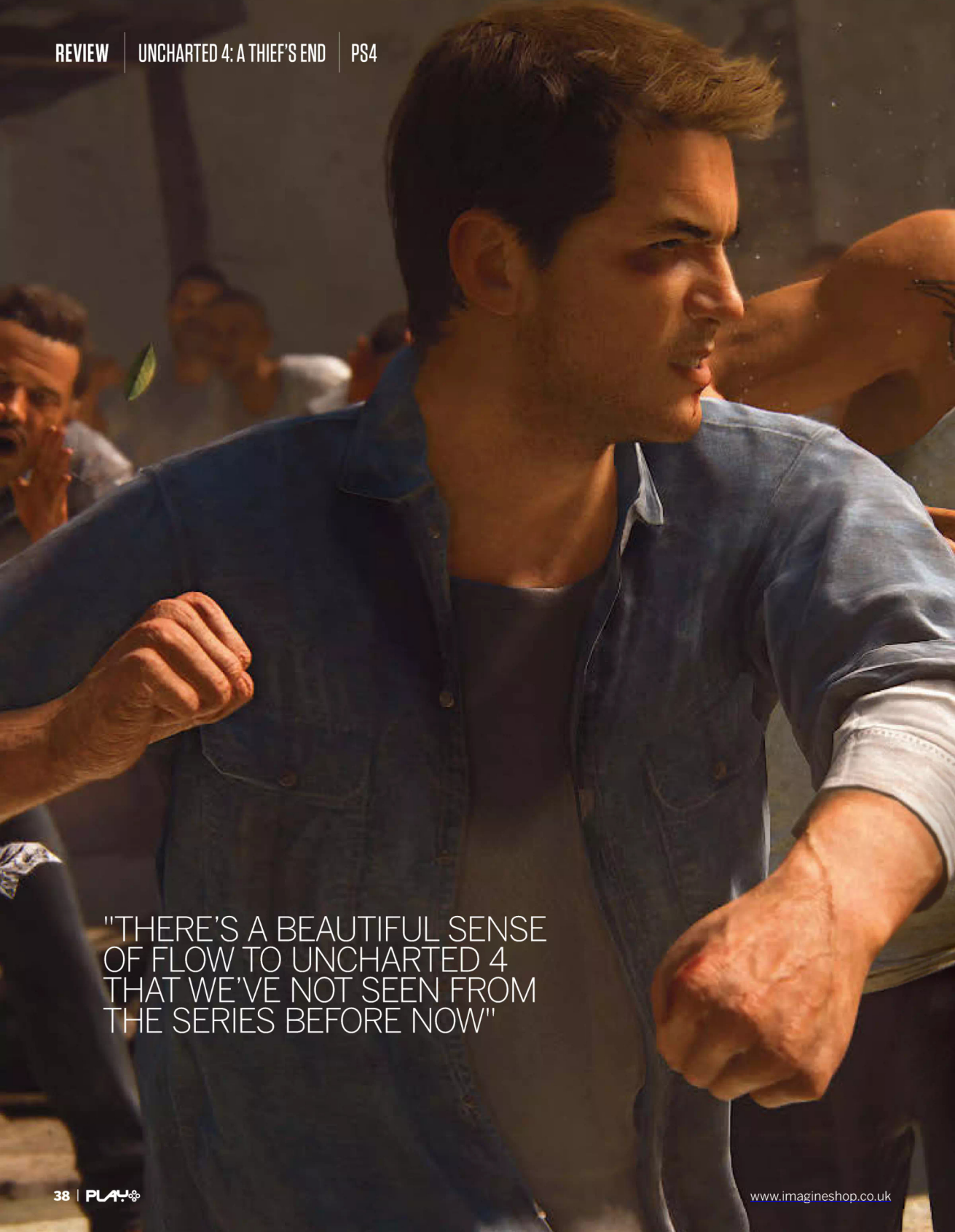
MEGA MAN LEGACY

■ **RETRO COLLECTIONS ARE** a great way to fill large gaps in your gaming knowledge at once and if you never played the early *Mega Man* games, this compilation of the first six offers both cracking value and a significant challenge. In case you hadn't heard, *Mega Man* games are bloody tough – knowing which bosses to take out first helps enormously (you gain their powers upon defeating them) but player skill is still the most important factor.



DAY OF THE TENTACLE

■ **WE'VE SEEN A** fair few LucasArts adventure games from back in the day get the remaster treatment lately – the original Monkey Island duo and *Grim Fandango* all scrub up pretty well, but this quirky cartoon adventure is the one that feels most at home in the 21st Century. The quirky humour still hits the mark, while the fact that it was designed to avoid the usual point-and-click pitfall of players getting stuck is ultimately what helps it most.

A cinematic screenshot from the video game Uncharted 4: A Thief's End. The main character, Nathan Drake, is shown from the chest up, wearing a blue denim shirt over a dark t-shirt. He has a determined expression and is looking off to the right. His hands are clenched into fists, suggesting a moment of action or conflict. The background is a blurred crowd of people, with warm, golden-hour lighting creating a sense of drama and intensity.

"THERE'S A BEAUTIFUL SENSE
OF FLOW TO UNCHARTED 4
THAT WE'VE NOT SEEN FROM
THE SERIES BEFORE NOW"



Uncharted 4: A Thief's End

Sic Parvis Magna



DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Sony

DEVELOPER
Naughty Dog

PSN PRICE
£49.99

PLAYERS
1-10

INSTALL SIZE
54GB

AGE RATING
16+

TWITTER
@Naughty_Dog



We'll come right out and admit it – we were terrified when we first loaded the Uncharted 4 disc into the PS4. Not just because of the

unholy racket the console made as the game installed, which we've since narrowed down to two options: either it was the tortured moan of a piece of hardware that grew increasingly aware with each new disc sector it read just how much it was about to be worked over, or the sound of the PS4 drilling to the Earth's core to secure the secondary thermal power source required to make this kind of technical miracle even vaguely possible.

No, it wasn't hardware failure we were concerned about. It was professional failure. Personal failure, even. Drake has appeared on no less than 13 of our covers in the past couple of years, every stolen glimpse at the game or fresh lead as to where the story might take us a reason to get excited anew for what is undeniably the most important title so far for PS4. But what if we had inadvertently misled

you fine people, and bought into not only Sony's hype but our own a little too much? What if... what if Naughty Dog couldn't deliver?

Fortunately, that fear is short-lived, lasting only as long as it takes to download a day one patch (because 2016) and for a splash screen of a glum-looking handsome chap to give way to two words and a pawprint. That ND logo screen is enough to pick up the glass of hope that we had just spilled all over ourselves in panic, dry us down and top up the cup again. Invigorated, we press on. Title screen. New Game. Hard (because screw Crushing for a first run). Loading. Such loading. 'What if it never loads?' we think to ourselves. What if the so-called Game Of The Year (our own bold words just two issues back) *doesn't even load*? It loads. And over the course of the hours that follow, any concerns about the quality of the game are laid to rest. We believe the hype again. We believe *our* hype again. Because as it turns out, as we and so many others have been accurately predicting for months, *Uncharted 4* is nothing short of exceptional.

While its opening might not quite have the impact of *Uncharted 2*'s first sequence, that isn't a criticism in and of itself. If there's one thing that becomes clear over the course of the game, it's that the more mature team behind the wheel now has a far better understanding of pacing, managing to keep tension and intensity towards the top end of the scale throughout rather than have things generally amble along but sometimes spike off the chart.

There are still lulls, as there need to be – nobody wants to be stuck on a white-knuckle ride for 20 hours. But thanks to refined mechanics that bring together the stealth, platforming and combat sequences that stood more or less alone in previous games, there's a beautiful flow to *Uncharted 4* that we've not seen from the series before, and that grows even more impressive when you realise how often the directors vacate their chairs to let players decide how a scene should play out.

Not in a Telltale sense, you understand. Naughty Dog doesn't even bother with the smoke and mirrors used there to present



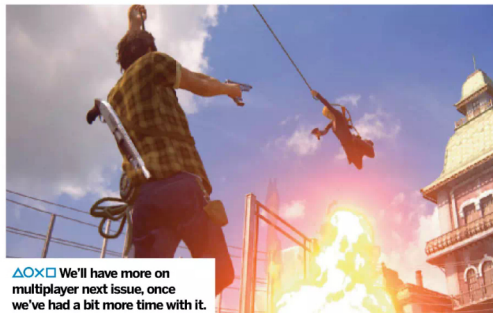
△××□ Turns out that big ol' pointy mountain that we saw in the very first footage of the game is pretty important. Who knew, right?



illusion of choice and freedom – the newly added dialogue options purely serve to add a personal flavour to your own experience here. Instead, it's the enemy encounters where directorial control is surrendered unto the wielder of the DualShock 4 and while this free-form approach does occasionally produce the odd misfire, it is also capable of creating empowering moments that easily out-punch the 'arms and legs inside the carriage at all times' set-pieces of earlier games. There's no illusion here – this is genuine freedom to tackle every challenge as you see fit.

With a solid grasp of the shooting mechanics (which you may find you need to tweak via the menu to get the most out of), you can go toe-to-toe with enemy forces in huge, explosive gunfights. With decent spatial awareness and planning, you can use the environment as an ally to confuse and outwit foes. Or, with patience and cunning, you can slip past entire encounters. The stealth route is the least developed – it really feels like it could use a distraction tool to break patrol patterns and create openings – but these elements aren't really meant to be used individually, rather combined to create your own solution to the heavily-armed problem at hand.

Through a combination of these player-led situations, toned down cinematic sequences that champion involvement over spectacle (yet still nail both) and progressive, inclusive narrative sections, Naughty Dog delivers its longest and most involving campaign to date. The influence of *The Last Of Us* is evident at every step, both directly and indirectly – there's a confidence on display here that seems to channel all the plaudits of the studio's first original game since the original *Uncharted*, while a lot of the mechanics (both in terms of gameplay and narrative) can almost be heard

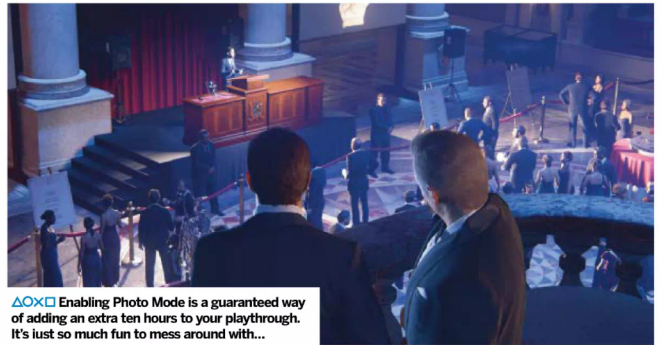
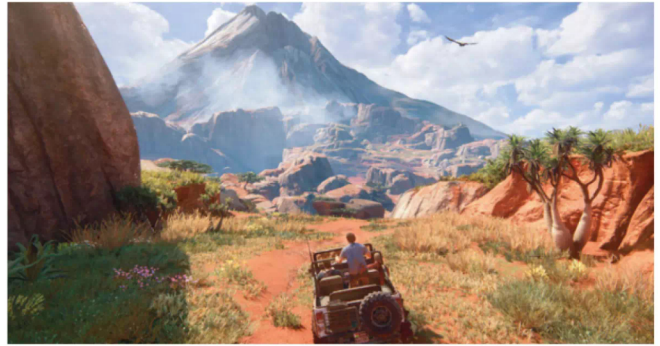


△××□ We'll have more on multiplayer next issue, once we've had a bit more time with it.

to click at times. Those hoping for Drake Vision to see/hear enemies through walls will be the only ones to leave disappointed in this respect – from the mini sandboxes of each combat zone to the superb character interactions, the best and most applicable parts of the fungal apocalypse are now part of Drake's final voyage, and it's all the better for it.

Most notable among these has to be characterisation, a weary Nate truly fleshed out here for the first time as he attempts to juggle a 'normal' life with that of the Saturday morning cartoon hero he's been portrayed as since the series' inception. An early scene with Elena lays the groundwork brilliantly, with both new and returning characters playing their parts to perfection to humanise Drake (as well as themselves, in fairness) and deliver a narrative that offers so much more than the 'get the treasure, hero!' efforts that have come before. What's more – and we'll be especially careful of spoilers here, *just in case* – Naughty Dog's handling of the finale is masterful, offering both the closure the team clearly wants on this chapter of PlayStation history and, at the same time, all kinds of options should anyone decide to come at the franchise from another angle down the line.

Characters are believable not only in cinematic sequences but also in the field. In lieu of objective markers or cluttered HUD nonsense, allies will give you a gentle verbal



△×□ Enabling Photo Mode is a guaranteed way of adding an extra ten hours to your playthrough. It's just so much fun to mess around with...

"THE INFLUENCE OF THE LAST OF US IS EVIDENT AT EVERY STEP, BOTH DIRECTLY AND INDIRECTLY"



PLAY MAG CHALLENGE



SHARE THESE FEATS, IF YOU CAN...



SNAP HAPPY

△ THINK YOU'RE GOOD with Photo Mode? Show off your best shots on our Community page and let's find out!



NO CHANCE IN HELL

□ DO YOU HATE yourself? Pick Crushing difficulty and don't use any guns, ever. Nobody is doing this, surely?

Beaten our trials? Let us know @PlayMag_UK!

prod in the right direction if you appear to lose track of where you're supposed to be going, and they're just as helpful in combat. Calling out enemies flanking you from off-screen, taking out threats before they can reach you and rushing to your side for devastating team attacks (these are dynamic rather than scripted, impressively), allies are a boon instead of the obstruction they can so often be. Just as well, too, since enemy AI is ruthless. While tenacious, foes aren't infallible – give them the slip by breaking line of sight and you'll reset the encounter to how it was before you were spotted, hopefully with a few less goons to worry about. On that note, checkpointing is extremely generous and even during long encounters, you'll rarely lose more than a minute or two to an untimely death.

There's also the small matter of... well, just look at it. *The Order: 1886* was a solid benchmark for visuals, even if then it had to squeeze itself into a letterbox to deliver its then-peerless characters and environments. Not that we expected anything less from Naughty Dog, but *Uncharted 4's* graphics

are, to use the technical term, some next level shit. Lighting, animation, modelling and interactions are all best in class to the point where we'd really hate to be working for any other developer right now. Naughty Dog just raised the bar so high that it's barely visible any more, so to be held to those same standards must be horrible for other devs. Unfair, even. This is PlayStation's flagship game, after all, and questions would be asked if it *wasn't* showcasing what this console could really do.

So yeah, turns out we had absolutely no reason to be worried. The collective hands of Naughty Dog are among the safest in the business and vast improvements across the board – from refined platforming and a greater focus on player choice to tighter combat and peerless characterisation for the medium – make this comfortably the best *Uncharted* yet and an utterly essential part of any self-respecting player's library.

Greatness awaits, screams all of Sony's PS4 marketing spiel. Not any more it doesn't.

It's here.

VERDICT

AS FITTING A CONCLUSION AS ANYONE COULD HOPE FOR



PlayMag_UK scored 10 for
Uncharted 4: A Thief's End

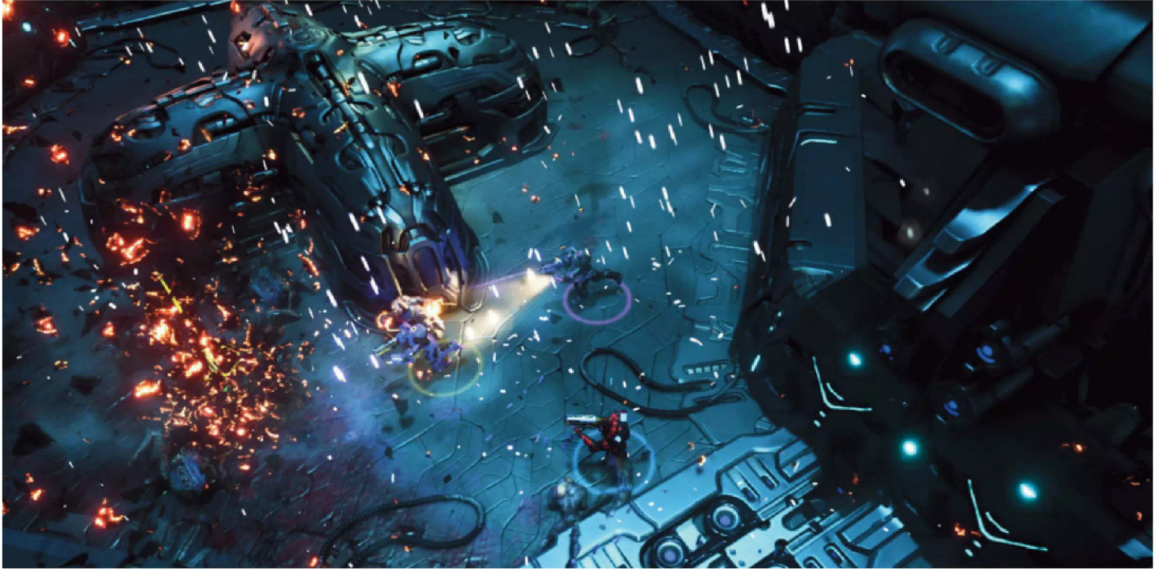
Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE



Optional tasks pop up in mission areas from time to time. The challenge level is high but the rewards make it worth the risk.



"IT WORKS FAR BETTER THAN A COMBINATION OF DIABLO AND ROBOTRON HAS ANY RIGHT TO"



Alienation

Save the last humans

△○×□ There are often so many different effects going on at once that it feels like the game is showing off. Maybe it is – we don't speak machine code, so we have no idea.



The mad scientists of development are always finding new ways to splice genres and create freakish new hybrids,

but the results are typically impossible to predict. More often than not, there's a colourful puff of smoke as disparate elements are combined, revealing some ill-advised abomination as it dissipates. But occasionally, the forces of good science prevail and we're treated to a fusion that actually works. The likes of rhythm-action dungeon crawler *Crypt Of The Necrodancer* and match-three RPG time vampire *Puzzle Quest* are great examples and while Housemarque's latest isn't quite such a revelation, it's at least fair to say that it works far better than a combination of *Resogun*, *Diablo* and *Robotron* has any right to.

Moment-to-moment action benefits greatly from this unholy fusion, dense waves of enemies flooding the screen as you employ a combination of tight twin-stick shooting, class-specific abilities and an assortment of looted weapons to carve through armies of bugs. It starts slow but quickly escalates to the point that you can barely see the screen for laser fire, hazardous goo, massive explosions and

legions of foes, all made even more chaotic by the fact that the camera sits so far from the action. It's a shame, since the models are clearly detailed enough to be used much bigger (as seen in the menus and bestiary) yet this is sacrificed in the interest of offering a broader view of the action. You'll appreciate that breathing room during four-player bedlam, mind – there's rarely a shortage of things to blast after the first hour or so.

Housemarque's pedigree shines through in the shooting, then, but the cracks start to show as you're dragged into the cycle of finding and improving your gear. By blending two genres with completely different endgame goals – grinding out incrementally better loot versus repeating stages to grow top scores – *Alienation* ends up offering a gameplay cycle that doesn't match the purity or compulsion of either of its elements. Scoring systems are decent enough but it never feels like the main goal as it does in, say, *Resogun*, while the loot pool seem deep enough to support the kind of long-term grind that keeps players glued to *Diablo* to this day. The upshot is that a wider cross-section of players has something to keep them coming back, but it's unlikely to hold your attention for as long as your favourite pure loot- or score-driven equivalent.

Electing to champion effects over fluidity, a generally solid 30fps (as opposed to *Resogun*'s slick 60) allows Housemarque more technical freedom to lob around beautiful visual flourishes and particle madness – an opportunity the studio embraces. Beams, blasts and bursts orfall shapes, sizes and colours lick across the screen frequently, the hardware only seeming to struggle with the pyrotechnics towards the busier tail end of the game.

Chuck in a slightly out-of-place *Souls*-inspired invasion mechanic and *Gears Of War*-style active reloads to make intense battles even more stressful and you've got an entertaining twin-stick loot-shooter, and one not shy to throw around new ideas in order to see what sticks. While perhaps not Housemarque's best game, it's easily its most ambitious and it's pleasantly surprising to see so many of the risks pay off, which certainly bodes well for *Matterfall*.

VERDICT

TWIN-STICK BEDLAM THAT'S A BLAST WITH COMPANY

PlayMag_UK scored 8 for Alienation

Follow our scores on JUST A SCORE

DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Sony

DEVELOPER
Housemarque

PSN PRICE
£15.99

PLAYERS
1-4

AGE RATING
16+

TWITTER
@Housemarque

Trophies 33





△××△ Micro-managing multiple enemies and defending against their unique attacks is key to surviving the game's gruelling encounters.



"SEVERED SUCCESSFULLY COMBINES FIRST-PERSON AND RPG ELEMENTS"



Severed

When Fruit Ninja met Zelda

ΔOXΔ The unique visual style and interesting interactions help *Severed* stand apart from similar dungeon crawlers.



Severed successfully combines first-person and RPG elements, much like the dungeon crawlers of old. But where the likes of

Ultima would leave movement and combat to keyboard presses, here the Vita's touchscreen is used to add a modern twist.

Anyone who has played *Fruit Ninja* will be instantly familiar with the combat system. Swiping a finger across the touchscreen governs the direction of your slash, while the length of the swipe dictates the damage inflicted. Dead easy, right?

Things get complicated when enemies begin to defend themselves against your blows, either with physical defence – a monkey-like monster encountered early on will use its four arms to block swipes in certain directions – or with numeric superiority. By the end of the game it's not unusual to be combating four, five or six monsters at once.

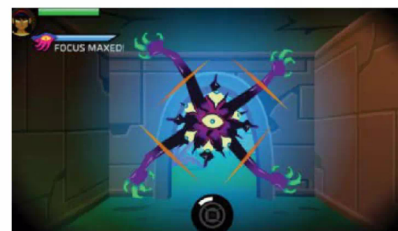
Once this happens, *Severed* becomes an ultra-violent game of micro-management, as hostiles attack from every direction. Success depends upon repelling attacks, exploiting the weaknesses of the various enemies and negating any magical buffs lending them a helping hand.

Against such odds, death is inevitable. But a game that could have become a frustrating slog is redeemed thanks to a generous autosave feature that will return you to the room just prior to where you were overcome.

The downside to this is an absence of tension. It's often easier to let a particularly fearsome group of creatures kill you if you're low on health, so triggering Sasha to respawn – fully healed – before you can so much as whisper 'harakiri'.

Lack of tension aside, battles are tactical affairs that reward the skilful player. Landing successive blows fills Sasha's Focus meter and killing a monster at full Focus triggers the titular Severed mode. Here time slows so that claws, eyes, wings and more can be sliced from your victims – all of which can then be used to level up Sasha's skills.

It's conceivable that *Severed* will be the Vita's last 'big' exclusive, and DrinkBox has dutifully risen to the occasion.



ΔOXΔ This 'bird' is one of the friendlier characters you'll come across, injecting some much-needed humour into the often sombre proceedings

DETAILS

PUBLISHER
DrinkBox Studios

DEVELOPER
In-House

PSN PRICE
£11.99

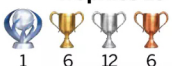
PLAYERS
1

INSTALL SIZE
225MB

AGE RATING
12+

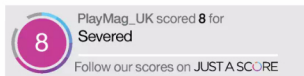
TWITTER
@DrinkBoxStudios

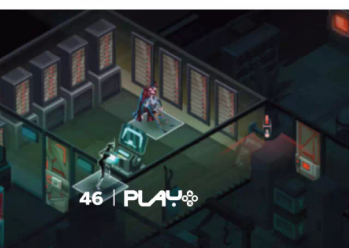
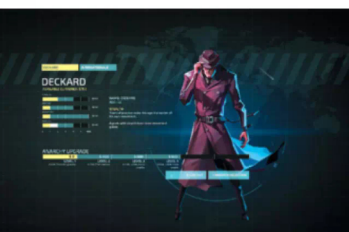
Trophies 25



VERDICT

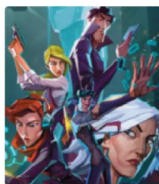
A CUT, THRUST AND PARRY ABOVE





Invisible, Inc.

If XCOM and Disgaea had a baby...



DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Klei Entertainment
DEVELOPER
In-House
PSN PRICE
£15.99
PLAYERS
1
INSTALL SIZE
1.1GB
AGE RATING
16+
TWITTER
@klei

Trophies 23



1 7 7 8



Your main enemy in *Invisible, Inc.* isn't the goons that populate the levels – it's time. Typically, you think of stealth games

as sluggish – you've got to wait, examine your surroundings, move at the optimum times. That's only partly true with *Invisible, Inc.*; sprinting is your friend, you want to dash from cover to cover, lure enemies away from you, scout out your objectives then barrel towards your goal. We take our stealth games seriously (always aiming for that mythical 'ghost' status), but *Invisible, Inc.* makes that practically impossible. And we loved it.

The game can be completed in three hours. But if you're in this for the procedural experiences, you'll stick around for ten times that. It seems simple enough at first – sneak in through the back entrance, pilfer what you need, move on. But *Invisible, Inc.* isn't a stealth game, despite its presentation. It's more like an SRPG with action elements – turn-based movements and procedural generation take away from that old-school *Metal Gear Solid* template that most stealth games have riffed on ever since.

Adding to that RPG feel is the way the missions are laid out – you're given a list of black sites to strike: do you focus on mods,

resources or cash? It all feels a bit *Ocean's Eleven* – you're working your way up the heist ladder until you're prepared for the final take. And what a take it is. We're confident in saying that the final mission is one of the most exciting procedural experiences we've ever played: you can't predict what's going to happen, and our survival hinged on being able to make off-the-cuff, make-or-break decisions. We were one step ahead of failure at every turn, in a way that felt written, planned. But it wasn't – it was the result of some carefully constructed design choices and ingenious algorithms, and we're still struggling to believe it was a mission unique to us.

The only thing we could criticise? Put in the hours, and you'll quickly begin to understand how the level tiles work – like in *Carcassonne*, you know what's drawn from the bag, and how to counter each piece. That's the only thing that dilutes it, but if it bothers you, bump up the difficulty and it'll feel like a new game.

VERDICT

A WONDERFUL FUSION OF GENRES



PlayMag_UK scored 9 for *Invisible, Inc.*

Follow our scores on **JUST A SCORE**

"INVISIBLE, INC. ISN'T A STEALTH GAME, DESPITE ITS PRESENTATION"

Switching to Incognita is a good way of scouting out the overall map and looking for routes – a nice break from the frantic rhythm of the regular game.

ENCRYPTED DATA DETECTED
HACK Executive Access Terminal
FIREWALLS: 1
Use INCOGNITA PROGRAMS to break.
EQUIPPED: LOCKPICK 1.0
BREAKS 1 FIREWALL. COST: 2 PWR.

Alekhine's Gun

Missman



With 10 relaunching the *Hitman* series recently to great success, Maximum couldn't really have picked a worse time to release

Alekhine's Gun. This is a third-person stealth game where you don disguises, infiltrate enemy compounds and perform assassinations – if it didn't already beg comparison to 10's flagship series, its proximity to the new *Hitman* places the two in direct competition and *Alekhine's Gun*, bluntly, doesn't stand a chance.

Set during the Cold War, and across various countries and decades, *Alekhine's Gun* ought to be filled with visual flair. But from a Nazi stronghold to an American bar, all the locations are lifeless and monotone. On the surface, mechanically, it's an almost carbon copy of *Hitman*: enter an area, find a disguise, slip past the guards, whack your target. But *Alekhine's Gun* is devoid of refinement. All of the details and idiosyncrasies that make each level of *Hitman* a puzzle – almost a full game – unto itself are missing from *Alekhine's Gun*. You

never mix up the formula. You never, really, have to think. Stab a guard, take his clothes and you're more or less set for the rest of the level. "*Alekhine's Gun*" is a (pretentious) reference to chess, but that's a disservice to the classic game. No, this is simple and mentally unchallenging – it's more like Kerplunk.

And that's when it's working. Walk into a room full of guards, massacre them all with a machine-gun then put your weapon away and wait. When someone comes to inspect the noise, even if you're still stood over all the bodies, as long as your gun is holstered they'll just turn and walk away. The controls are clumsy and your movement is slow. Harping on technological issues might be basic, entry-level criticism, but when it comes to *Alekhine's Gun*, what little there is to love (the weapons do sound great) is drowned in poor presentation. This is a poor *Hitman* imitation, bereft of any sort of sophisticated design or writing. And it couldn't have come at a worse time.

VERDICT

AGENT 47 HAS NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT



PlayMag_UK scored 3 for
Alekhine's Gun

Follow our scores on [JUST A SCORE](#)

DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Maximum Games

DEVELOPER
In-House

PSN PRICE
£44.99

PLAYERS
1

INSTALL SIZE
6.8GB

AGE RATING
18+

TWITTER
@MaximumGames

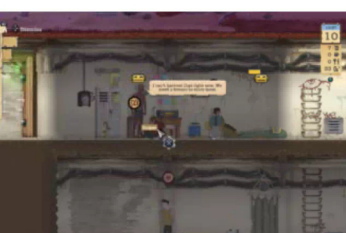
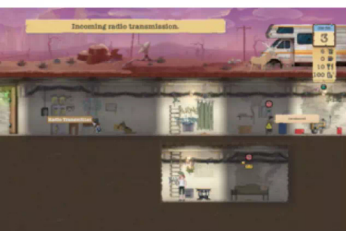
Trophies 27



△××□ Levels are spread across locations and time periods but all feel samey.



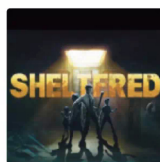
△××□ Yes, it really does look this good. Why the hell are you playing *Uncharted* when THIS exists?



AOX Each and every run-through begins with you choosing the five members of your family, pet included. In addition to selecting one beneficial trait per character (heavy sleeper, small eater and so on), race and gender are also down to you.

Sheltered

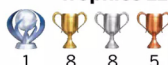
Armageddon too stressed for this



DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Team17
DEVELOPER
Unicube
PSN PRICE
£9.99
PLAYERS
1
INSTALL SIZE
267MB
AGE RATING
12+
TWITTER
@Team17Ltd

Trophies 22



Sheltered's title not only refers to the grim situation facing its main characters, but also the complacent minds of those destined

to play it. Never before has a game set in the aftermath of a nuclear apocalypse pulled fewer punches: it offers a malleable narrative that literally never ends happily, and the more attached you become to the characters that you have a hand in creating, the more gruelling the whole enterprise becomes. Children will be inexplicably murdered above ground when you have no option but to send them out scavenging. If you don't find the resources to build a freezer for stashing corpses, family members will start losing their marbles. And when things really start going to pot, that drifter you kindly took under your wing will stand around and watch you all starve, berate you for not feeding your dog and then rob you. The word "bleak" doesn't do it justice, but this is a shrewd, bracing mystery as well as a crisis management sim.

Explanations are scarce. The game's tutorial is swift and pitiless, and doing something as simple as feeding the family pet involves investigation. And yet somehow, it's a totally engrossing experience, which is incredible when you consider that it's fixated on stressing you out. You're always on the brink of some kind of

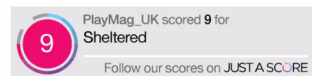
crisis, but every small victory – be it the salvation of a random rainstorm or the discovery of an abandoned church filled with supplies – brings both joy and genuine comfort.

Windows occasionally pop up to let you know what your clan are saying or thinking. They feel like clues at first, but it's a con: there's no reprieve from the brutal randomness of everything, and the fact that so much is down to chance might be a barrier for some. You can improvise yourself out of most situations if you've been paying attention, but when you turn your back on something, it sucker punches you. If you manage your trips to the surface carelessly, you'll be forced to watch everyone slowly perish because you never found a hinge for that freezer or because it just won't rain.

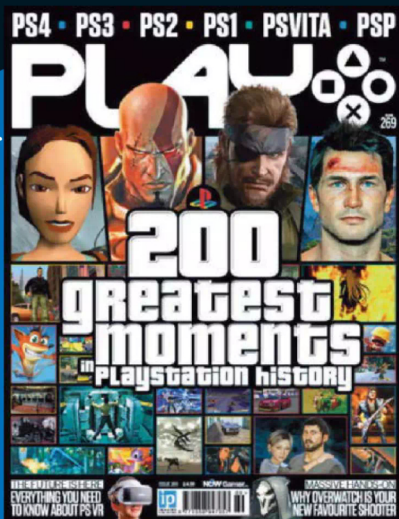
If you enjoyed last year's mobile sleeper *Fallout Shelter*, but wanted more complexity, better combat and a greater sense of achievement even in failure, look no further. Who said that certain death had to be depressing?

VERDICT

BLEAK, BRUTAL AND EXHILARATING



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WAY TO READ
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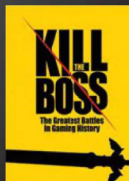
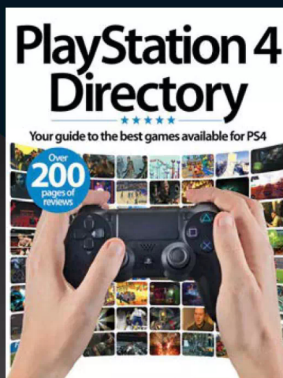
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Warning: Graphic Content

EDITOR'S
PICK



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GREATDIGITALMAGS.COM



FORMAT PSONE

RELEASE DATE 22 MARCH 1996

PUBLISHER CAPCOM

DEVELOPER IN-HOUSE

PLAY SCORE 95%

METACRITIC SCORE N/A

RESIDENT EVIL

Exploding onto the scene two decades ago, Resident Evil established survival horror with its blend of jump scares and considered combat

SURVEY THE wreckage of the *Resident Evil* brand in 2016 and you'd be hard pressed to find a reason for resuscitation.

It's a bloated disaster of entangled timelines, conspiracy conditions, and B-movie nonsense that seems to actively seek out new ways to irritate its fervent fan base. Still, were you to rewind time by 175 - 200 hours, you'd be looking at something of a different story: *Resident Evil* shambled out of the shadows and into the spotlight for the very first time, changing the landscape of gaming forever.

It did it quickly, too; *Resident Evil* was an instant success in every territory it invaded throughout 1996, helping to shift millions of PlayStation consoles and establishing itself as one of the best-selling games of the fifth generation. Prospective players rallied behind what Capcom would later dub as the advent of 'survival horror'. Gamers were stunned by *Resident Evil*'s evocative visual and sound design, and it wasted no time in perpetuating a foreboding sense of anxiety throughout every single one of its claustrophobic corridors and forboding torture rooms. It should come as no surprise, then, that *Resident Evil* debuted as one of the first PlayStation games to receive

a Mature rating from the ESRB. It's a violent, horrifying jaunt into the unknown – and it doesn't let up. Seeing STARS Alpha member Joseph Frost graphically torn apart by Cerberus was shocking back in 1996, and though that original FMV intro has become legend for all of the wrong reasons – voice acting in the Nineties was a little different – it was a telling start to the horrors that were to come.

That's exactly how game director Shinji Mikami wanted *Resident Evil*: terrifying, unpredictable, yet grounded in reality. Originally brought to life as a spiritual successor to Capcom's legendary *Sweet Home* (often heralded as the forerunner to the survival horror genre), *Resident Evil* was designed to be a horror game that wasn't as reliant on the same supernatural shenanigans that fuelled that 1989 RPG and the likes of *Alone In The Dark*. And so Mikami introduced the world to the T-virus outbreak – turning the infected dead of Raccoon City into monstrous zombies that stalked Chris Redfield and Jill Valentine through the Spencer Mansion.

Gore, guns, and inventory management fuelled *Resident Evil*'s action, but it was the jump scares that cemented it in history. Who

SCARIEST ENEMIES

Resident Evil is full of some pretty terrifying enemies, but these are three that still haunt us



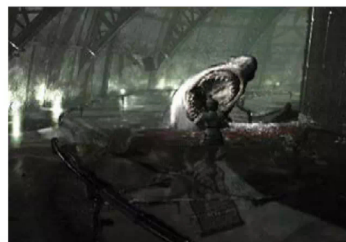
HUNTER

For a good amount of *Resident Evil*, you are left to face off with the easy-to-defeat walking dead, though it isn't long before you come across the reptilian Hunters – mutated creatures that require you to master your shotgun skills if you want to survive.



YAWN

Capcom cleverly liked to play on common phobias in *Resident Evil*, like snakes with fangs bigger than your head. Yawn, the giant, T-Virus infected snake tears through S.T.A.R.S. members, before two fateful encounters in the attic and library.



NEPTUNE

As if we needed another reason to not return to the water after watching *Jaws*, Neptune comes along and scars us for life. An infected shark that surpasses the Great White in size, and proves to be one of the most challenging battles in the game.

could ever forget the first encounter with the pair of Cerberus dogs in the Spencer Mansion? You're moving confidently through a corridor – inspecting the statue with the map in the vase – before two horrors come crashing through the windows. That was the first time we experienced how powerful true fear can be in interactive entertainment, and every studio in the world, including Capcom itself, has struggled to recreate the momentum and captivating atmosphere of these original *Resident Evil* moments.

The now infamous tank controls and fixed camera only helped enhance the feeling of hopelessness in the mission at hand. Combat was always a desperate struggle, as players wrestled with the basic third-person mechanics to put a bullet in the head of the walking dead, mutated reptilian Hunters and even an array of infected creatures. This combined surprisingly well with lateral thinking puzzles, forcing you to rearrange paintings, solve environmental mysteries and generally press switches in the vague hope that it wouldn't trigger your untimely death.

Unlike a lot of games considered to be game-changing in their impact, *Resident Evil* still holds up today. The controls may have aged, but the game's appeal hasn't. Returning now, 20 years later,

“IT SHOULD COME AS NO SURPRISE THAT RESIDENT EVIL DEBUTED AS ONE OF THE FIRST PLAYSTATION GAMES TO RECEIVE A MATURE RATING”

KEY FACTS

■ *Resident Evil* was released as *Biohazard* in Japan, but as a DOS game called *Biohazard* already existed in the US, an internal competition was held at Capcom to come up with a new name for the Western market

■ *Resident Evil* is the only entry in the franchise to feature a 'best-case scenario' ending as Capcom was unsure how the game would fare financially.

■ A Director's Cut of *Resident Evil* was later released, adding analog control, rumble support and remixed item placement and puzzle solutions.

even the dialogue is still appealing; there's enough accidental humour to be found from the infamously terrible translation and localisation. Every aspect of the game augments the game's B-movie values and intent.

You'll still feel a rush of fear as you knowingly remove an old shotgun from a wall, only to encase poor Jill Valentine in a room with a descending ceiling trap. You'll laugh minutes later as good ol' Barry Burton declares, "That was too close; you were almost a Jill sandwich!" It's a line delivered with a unique blend of accidental sarcasm and hammy acting, and it's all a part of *Resident Evil*'s success story.

The original *Resident Evil* built a franchise and a genre seemingly out of nowhere, and that sort of success shouldn't be overlooked – even if the former has been a disappointing cycle of diminishing returns over the last two decades. From its unique blend of horrific creatures, clunky controls and perplexing handling, to the desperate hunt for ink ribbons and green herbs, *Resident Evil* has stood the test of time with its challenging combat and scare-heavy gameplay. Whether that success can ever truly be replicated by the franchise again remains to be seen, though with the original standing the test of time so excellently, it may never need to.





RESIDENT EVIL 5

■ Following the success of *Resident Evil 4*, Capcom elected to take the franchise further towards action, and the result is a game that sold well, but stood in stark contrast to the reasons we fell in love with the original *Resident Evil*. This action-adventure game would forever be viewed as a misstep, although it's actually pretty enjoyable in co-op.



RESIDENT EVIL 6

■ *Resident Evil 6* should have been a big success for Capcom, but it suffered from a problem we very rarely see in this industry: it included too much content. So much, so in fact, that it tried to appease all of the different fans of *Resident Evil* that it had cultivated with a four-part split narrative adventure, but failed to do any one section with finesse.



RESIDENT EVIL 0

■ *Resident Evil: 0* had its moments, but ultimately it stuck too closely to the original *Resident Evil* format to make any great strides forward. The pre-rendered backgrounds were a delight, as was investigating the events that led to the Spencer Mansion incident, but the story and clunky character switching mechanic ultimately let it down.



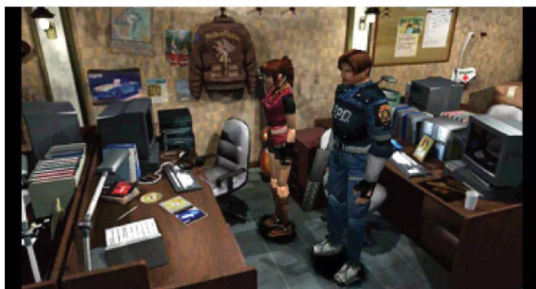
RESIDENT EVIL: CODE VERONICA

■ A step forward for the franchise – taking *Resident Evil* into 3D as the pre-rendered backdrops were abandoned – it's an unrelenting adventure that tested the skills (and patience) of anybody that dared step to it. It suffered from some pacing issues, but *Code Veronica* still holds up as a must-play for any *Resifan*.



RESIDENT EVIL 3: NEMESIS

■ Set in the 24 hours preceding *Resident Evil 2*, Capcom took this as an opportunity to introduce us to one of its all time greatest villains: Nemesis. This seemingly unstoppable creature is hot on your heels throughout the adventure – *Resident Evil 3* evokes the kind of fear that the best slasher films of the Eighties were aiming for.



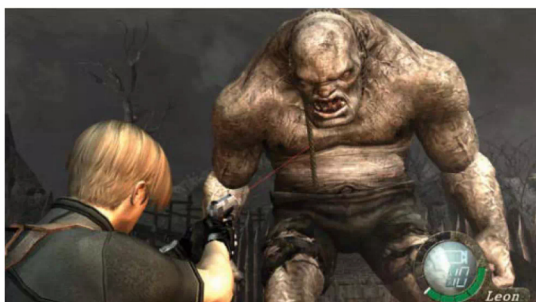
RESIDENT EVIL 2

■ *Resident Evil 2* is the closest we've come to receiving a survival horror masterpiece. Set in Raccoon City as the Umbrella outbreak consumes all, *RE2* features incredible level design and an unrelenting pace as Leon and Claire struggle to escape the city before it's scorched off the earth.



RESIDENT EVIL 4

■ This is one of those rare games that comes along but once a generation and changes everything. Just as *Resident Evil* originally created the survival horror genre, *Resident Evil 4* went ahead and re-invigorated third-person action-adventure games with horror. Shinji Mikami was faced with an almost impossible task when he approached *Resident Evil 4* – determined to advance the franchise he helped create back in 1996 – and so he decided to overhaul everything about it. The static camera was replaced by a tight over-the-shoulder POV; the combat was dynamic and tense throughout, and the enemy design was nothing short of inspired. There will never be another game quite like *Resident Evil 4*.



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INTERVIEW



NEVER MIND THE BLOCKS

Catherine record-breaker Daniel 'Ghoul02' Gulyas on the art of destroying the best co-op times alone

What made you want to get into speedrunning?

This is always a fun question to answer. I'd known of speedrunning and SDA (Speed Demos Archive, which was basically the original speedrunning site) for so long that I actually don't know when I found it the first time. I always thought it was cool but never thought to do it myself. I eventually developed a fascination with *Sonic Individual Level* speedrunning, in part due to little challenges I used to do in *Sonic Adventure 2 Battle* as a kid where I'd try to collect as many rings as possible in a short time. Then, especially when *Sonic Generations* came out, I really got into watching ILs on YouTube, which eventually led to watching DarkspinesSonic doing *Sonic Heroes*, which led to SpeedRunsLive where I found Werster, which made me finally decide that this would be fun to do. I know, that's a stupidly complicated chain of events, but I really don't have the usual 'I watched X at Games Done Quick and I thought it was amazing' that you hear from most people...

Do you have a favourite glitch, skip or trick from any run you've seen or done?

As far as stuff I've done, I'd probably have to say that recoil boosting with Milla in *Freedom Planet* is just an all around awesome trick. In general, my favourite tricks are things that add speed and tech to platformers without completely breaking the game. I don't usually run games with a ton of glitches, but of those, the stuff where the game really struggles to understand what's going on are probably my favourite, so stuff like the old *Pokémon Gold* Any% route, where you'd be able to distort the game's map by having more than six Pokémon in your party, or any of the stuff in *Emerald* that Werster found.

How much time, roughly, would you say you have put into *Catherine* in particular?

As a speedrunner, not as much as you might think. Probably my favorite thing about the game is how it naturally pushes to become good at it by simply

playing and beating all that it has to offer, and by the time that you're done, you're legitimately good at the game. If I had to make a guess, I'd say probably a couple hundred hours, a majority of which was just casually playing the game. It's probably not the most I've played any of my speedruns, but it's up there (I know in *Tropical Freeze* I have a similar number of hours). Compared to a lot of other runners who have thousands of hours in their games, I play a lot more of them and have a fair bit less time in each.

How much preparation goes into something like your upcoming Summer Games Done Quick run?

There's a lot of things – I'll probably be streaming it a ton over the next few months to stay in practice (and improve). I'll need to decide who else I want to have as co-commentators, if any. That's especially tricky because there aren't really any other runners of the game that will be at the event, so I'd probably either need to sit down and teach them how the game works

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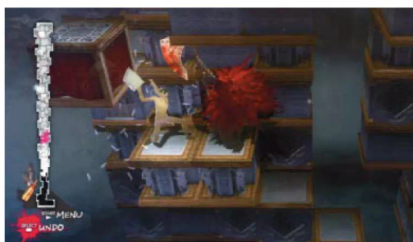
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so they understand or let them play the dumb guy and ask questions. Planning out commentary, what to talk about and when is also huge, which makes sure that people understand what they're watching, but the run can't be scripted either – the commentary needs to have a proper flow. Those are probably the three biggest [things], but there's smaller things like preparing donation incentives (stuff like a hand cam) and talking to the volunteer host during my run are also important.

What are the factors that determine what games you tend to learn and run?

I try to pick a game that I wouldn't mind playing for hours and hours on end. This means a lot of things, really. Did I enjoy the game casually? How much do I enjoy the main tech in the speedrun? Is there a community for the game already? How much depth is there in the game's movement, combat and/or routing, which is where we look to determine what the

fastest way to beat a game is. For something like a platformer, it's relatively simple. But for an RPG, it can be this complicated, dynamic thing that changes with every situation in the run, my favourite example being *Pokémon Fire Red* Round Two, where you have to have 60 Pokémon in your Pokédex, so responding to various RNG patterns is incredibly important.

A huge one is how much I enjoy the music – the only game I run without listening to the in-game soundtrack is actually *Catherine* (Babel's music is not as good as the rest of the game). Since I usually prefer playing platformers and RPGs, those are the games I usually end up speedrunning or wanting to speedrun.

If you want to know the games I've done the most seriously in the past, they're *Catherine*, *Persona 4 Golden*, *Donkey Kong Country: Tropical Freeze*, *Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles*, *Yo-kai Watch*, *The World Ends With You* and *Valkyria Chronicles 2*... and I've dabbled in lots of others. I tend to play a lot more games than some speedrunners.

Finally, what advice or suggestions would you offer to someone who is interested in getting into speedrunning?

There's a lot of good and interesting paths on this. Pick the game that sounds the most fun to run (could be your favourite game or just one that you really enjoy), and watch a video of the run. If you enjoy watching the video, play the game and mess around a bit with some of what happens in the speedrun. If it is still fun, keep going and eventually, you'll probably want to do a full game run.

Another great way is to just do races to start. I played *Sonic Adventure 2 Battle* so much as a kid that I felt comfortable sitting down and beating it in one sitting and trying to race others at it. There's all kinds of opportunities for this, between the "Get Yourself Speedrunning" races that happen after every GDQ or the Mystery Tournament, where both racers are given a game they've never played and a short goal and have to accomplish it quickly.

EXTENDED PLAY

DARK SOULS

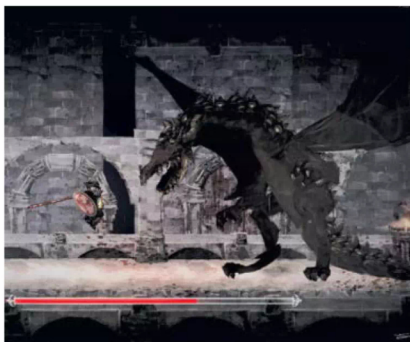
If you have recently overcome the gruesome obstacle course that is FromSoftware's latest game and are looking for something to fill the gap, don't worry – here are a few options



BLOODBORNE

■ **THE MOST OBVIOUS** game to suggest if you're looking for more after *Dark Souls III* is *Bloodborne*. The fact that *DSIII*'s sales were so good suggests that it was the first *Souls* experience for quite a few and this quicker PS4 exclusive is certainly worth going back to, if only so you can see just how much it helped shape *III*'s refined combat. It's a far more aggressive game and hiding behind a shield isn't a viable option here, but this really helps you to develop a better understanding of openings in boss patterns. Even if you *did* play it already, expansion *The Old Hunters* offers another great reason to return to Yharnam.





SALT & SANCTUARY

■ **WE'VE LOVED INDIE** developer Ska Studios ever since we first played its *Dishwasher* games. Trust us, they're not what they sound like – both handle like 2D *Devil May Cry* games and in the same vein, its latest effort is effectively *Dark Souls*, only one dimension lighter. There are parallels across the board, so Salt replaces Souls as the catch-all currency, huge named bosses stand ready to beat you to a pulp, messages can be left for other players and the whole thing is wonderfully bleak. If it's a challenge you're after, you won't find one closer to the *Souls* series than this.



DLC/EXPANSIONS

■ **SINCE THE RISE** of DLC as a platform for supporting games after release was established, a few names have risen to the top. Both core *Borderlands* games had exceptional support, for instance, and Bungie's continual improvements to *Destiny* have us hungry for a true sequel. From us up there, too – *Dark Souls* had *Artorias Of The Abyss*, while *DSII* got three all-new areas and more, all of which you can grab via the complete *Scholar Of The First Sin* edition. Both options are excellent, it must be said, and feature arguably the best bosses in their respective games.



THE BOARD GAME

■ **IT'S NOT OFTEN** that we cover Kickstarter projects, since we usually don't know how things will pan out by the time we're on sale and don't want to be drumming up hype for something that gets cancelled. There's no such danger here, though – Steamforged's officially licensed tabletop version of *Dark Souls* hit its funding target in just three minutes and soared past the £1 million mark in just two days.

Unlike so many licensed games, this looks like a true love letter to the series. Figurines of player characters and enemies are wonderfully detailed, while bosses move and act via card decks that simulate their in-game AI routines and attacks. It's not expected to ship until early next year, however, so if you missed the crowdfunding campaign, you should still be able to pick up a copy at launch.



LORDS OF THE FALLEN (AND FRIENDS)

■ **IF YOU'VE ALREADY** exhausted all of the fine alternatives we've suggested and still need to scratch that *Souls* itch, no problem – it is going to require lowering your standards somewhat, though. Deck13's *Lords Of The Fallen* is the best recent copycat and it's not too bad, while older PS3 titles such as *Strength*

Of The Sword 3 and *Malicious* both offer great boss battles but very little else that *Souls* fans might be looking for. You could even go back to From's own *King's Field* games, if you dare – the hardcore RPGs that the studio used to make were never particularly good to begin with, plus they've aged terribly.

TROPHY GUIDE

PS PLUS TROPHY GUIDE



TROPICO 5

PLATFORM: PS4 DIFFICULTY: 2/5

TROPHIES: 51 🏆 1 🏆 1 🏆 15 🏆 34

■ **IT MIGHT NOT** have the most challenging of Trophy lists but just know going into Tropico 5 that you'll need to dedicate a fair amount of time to getting the Platinum. Most of the incidental Trophies should pop naturally, so long as you're not just banging the controller against your head – there are a surprising amount of online Trophies for this kind of game, although you can boost for these with friends if it isn't just you with nothing better to do than pretend to be El Presidente. Just remember to manually save your game frequently. In our experience, autosaves have a habit of screwing people over.



SWITCH GALAXY ULTRA

PLATFORM: PS4/VITA DIFFICULTY: 3/5

TROPHIES: 9 🏆 0 🏆 2 🏆 2 🏆 4

■ **UNLESS YOUR REACTIONS** are sharp and your eyes trained not to blink, you might want to give this a miss – the lane-changing mayhem hits insane speeds as you upgrade your vehicles and some of the Trophies will simply be impossible if you struggle to keep up. Cheapskate (don't buy any upgrades) requires you to disable tutorials though once you know what everything does, having no speed upgrades can actually be more helpful than you might expect as it keeps speeds manageable. Beating 20,000 on Survival will be the stumbling block although if you have a friend to boost with, it can be earned in the Barrier mode instead.

TABLE TOP RACING: WORLD TOUR

PLATFORM: PS4 DIFFICULTY: 2/5

TROPHIES: 31 🏆 1 🏆 5 🏆 10 🏆 15

■ **A RACING GAME** inspired by *Micro Machines* from one of the *WipeOut* creators sounds amazing, but that only makes *TTR* even more disappointing, sadly. Still, at least it's an easy Platinum, although there's a bit of grinding to be done. While rinsing the campaign and aiming for stars and gold trophies, keep an eye out for collectible coins as well – there's no free roam mode and you'll need to find all of these to tick off four Trophies. You can just keep upgrading the best cars (you'll need to for *Pimped That Ride!* anyway) until events are easier for the most part, after which you should only have the Special Events and a bunch of multiplayer grinding to worry about. At least it was free, so finding other people with the game isn't an issue...





BIONIC COMMANDO REARMED 2

PLATFORM: PS3 DIFFICULTY: 2/5

TROPHIES: 12 🏆 0 🥈 1 🥉 4 🏆 7

■ **IF IT WERE** as good as the original *Rearmed*, we probably wouldn't have such a problem with this Trophy list. As it isn't, however, being asked to complete the game anywhere from three times up is a bit rich. Still, at least you can reduce that number by combining Trophies – do your first run on Hard without jumping, then a second in

“BEING ASKED TO COMPLETE THE GAME THREE OR MORE TIMES IS A BIT RICH”

co-op with the prestige items (unlocked after you collect all the upgrades) on, then it's just a case of mopping up challenges and incidental Trophies. Oh, and a note on co-op: it's local only but if you plug in a second pad and kill player two, you can just go through alone like normal.

LOCOROCO COCORECCHO! & GOD OF WAR: GHOST OF SPARTA

PLATFORM: PS3/VITA DIFFICULTY: 0/5

TROPHIES: 0 🏆 0 🥈 0 🥉 0 🏆 0

■ **YES. YOU READ** that correctly. Two of this month's games don't have any Trophies at all – *LocoRoco Cocoreccho!* is almost a decade old and comes from a time before Trophies were even a thing, while *Ghost Of Sparta* was first released on PSP, which never had Trophy support at all. With a pitiful two Platins up for grabs across all six freebies, those who like to fill their Trophy cabinets using Plus games are out of luck this month. Still, at least *Ghost Of Sparta* is a good game, right?



BATTLE AGES

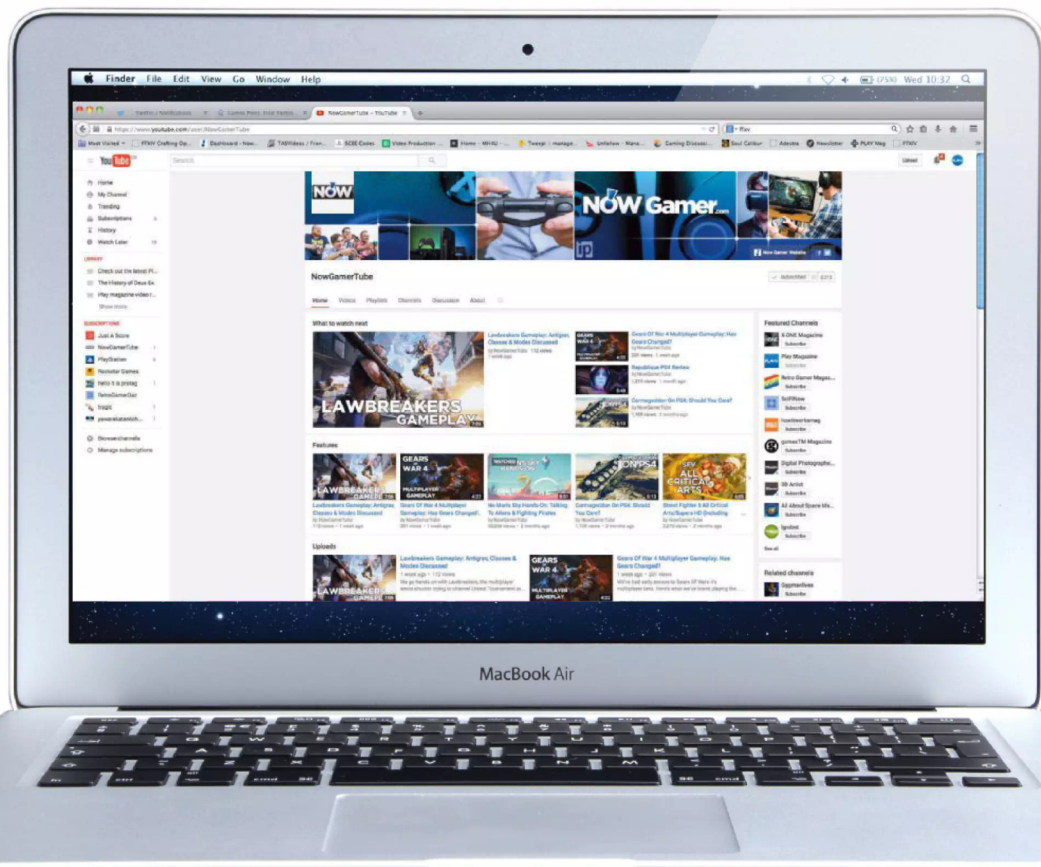
PLATFORM: PS4 DIFFICULTY: 5/5

TROPHIES: 14 🏆 0 🥈 1 🥉 2 🏆 11

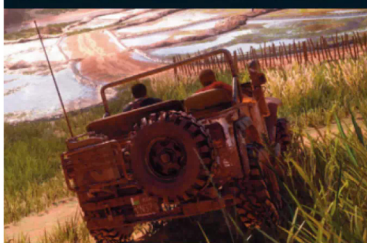
■ **WE THOUGHT IT** might be a nice gesture to offer Trophy hunters a little something in lieu of two free games' worth of rewards, so we checked out the recent additions to PS4's free-to-play library and found this, the follow-up to the somewhat grindy *Battle Islands*. Sadly, this looks even more designed around monetisation than the last game was, not to mention the fact that the Trophy list is already a nightmare. You'd need to play for months just to upgrade through the different ages, plus the stat target ones are ludicrously high. And as one final kick in the teeth, there's no Platinum. Don't even bother – just wait for next month's selection and cross your fingers!

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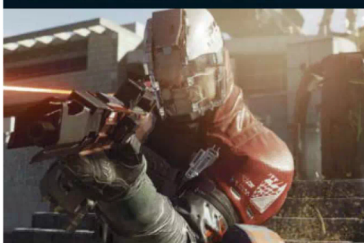


UNCHARTED 4: A THIEF'S END



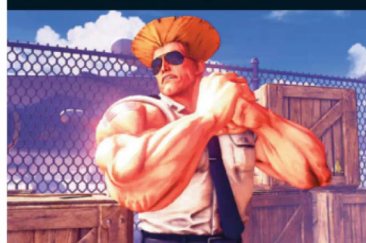
OUR REVIEW IS in this issue but since some people prefer to watch rather than read, we thought we'd make a video. We're nice like that.

BATTLEFIELD VS COD



THE TWO FPS giants are squaring up to each other again, but there can only be one winner. Find out which our money is on this year...

STREET FIGHTER V



NEW CHARACTERS KEEP joining the roster so if you want to find out what they can really do, keep an eye on our channel!

SHARING



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THE INDIE 100

Every must-play indie game on PlayStation is right here – if you love indies, this will help you fill any gaps in your collection.



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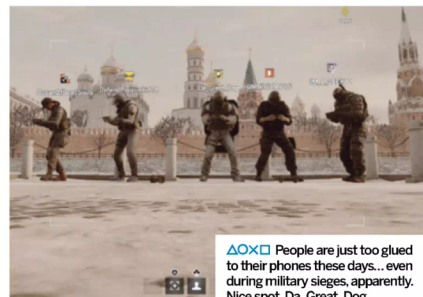
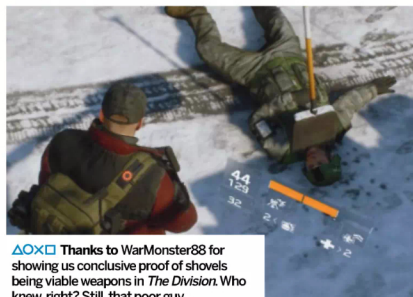
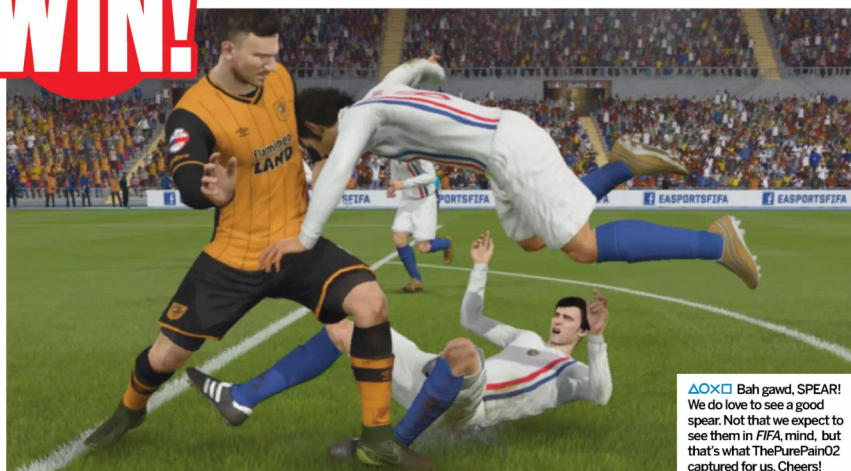
■ **PS4'S NEW** Community feature is a great way of finding like-minded players that share your interests. That's why we've set up our own **Play** Community where you can join our game sessions, share your best screenshots, win free games and other prizes, and connect with other PlayStation fans. Come and join our ever-growing community of readers today!

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1 Search for Play_Mag_UK in the Friends menu, select our profile, then navigate down to 'Communities'.

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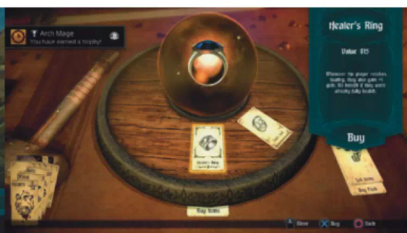
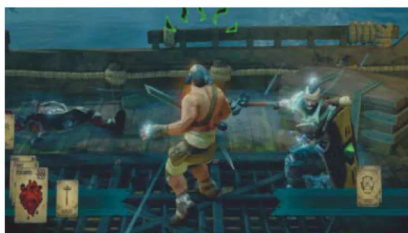
WIN! YOUR BEST SCREENS



YOU HAVEN'T
PLAYED...?

HAND OF FATE

What do you get when you combine a tabletop RPG, Batman combat, a deck-building card game and one of the greatest NPCs of all time? Why, this little gem, of course!

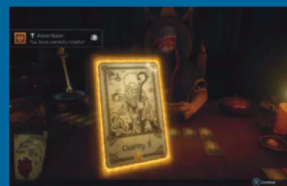


■ **THE JOURNEY THAT** *Hand Of Fate* takes you on is like nothing else you've experienced before. First, you meet The Dealer, simultaneously your dungeon master and nemesis for this adventure. Wonderfully characterised, he mocks your failures and cites his own generosity when you succeed, throwing increasingly cruel cards into the deck as his patience wears thin. You actually have a degree of control over the dungeon deck and while he gets to pepper it with hazard cards, you're free to put in any encounters and loot that you've found and unlocked in previous runs (by successfully clearing events) to try and swing the odds in your favour a little. Each new event unlocks yet more, so it's worth mixing up your cards to improve your chances.

As you explore, the cards throw up all kinds of events – chance encounters with strangers, perilous traps, savage ambushes and important decisions – and they're all handled differently. Dialogue choices change based on inventory and situation (you might be able to buy your way out of danger if you're rich enough, for instance), skill rolls involve finding Success cards shuffled among Failure ones and combat takes the form of an action game, weapons and powers adding to your strength in real time in a basic yet functional battle system influenced by *Assassin's Creed* and *Batman*. Endlessly replayable and always capable of surprising, *Hand Of Fate* is an overlooked gem so we can't wait to get our hands on the recently announced sequel.

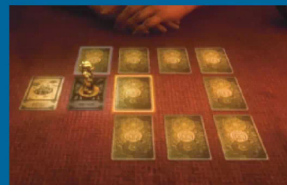
THREE PHASES

How the curious mix of genres actually plays out



BUILDING A DECK

The cards you choose are used to build your dungeon. Risky events can pay big, so you can't afford to play safe.



START EXPLORING

Card events must be resolved when revealed, with choices to make and games of luck and skill to try and win.



TO THE DEATH!

Get into a fight and it becomes an action game, borrowing the *Arkham* combat and employing it fairly well.

FOR PEOPLE WHO ♥ RETRO GAMES

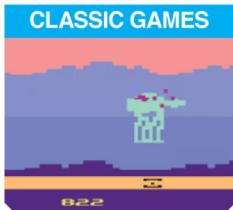
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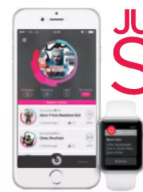


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LET'S PLAY... VITA PICKS



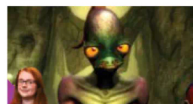
LUKE ALBIGÉS AXIOM VERGE

This one-man show is the best *Metroid* game I've played in years and the long-promised Vita version is here at last. It's a perfect fit for the handheld, and I'll love having my ass kicked by it wherever I go.



LIAM WARR ROCKET LEAGUE

Remote Play is a wonderful thing in theory but as it turns out, it doesn't quite allow for the precision needed to pull off the crazy aerial antics that this game demands at high-level play. Stick to bot matches.



REBECCA RICHARDS ODDWORLD: NEW 'N' TASTY

Despite really wanting to find something original for the PS Vita to recommend, there are some great ports of awesome games that shouldn't be overlooked - *New 'N' Tasty* on Vita is a real treat. Also, farts.



PAUL WALKER-EMIG HOTLINE MIAMI

While a standard controller is clearly the optimal way to play (well, aside from mouse and keyboard), this works surprisingly well on Vita. The best score attack game you can fit in your pocket.

PS4



GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Alien: Isolation	249	9
Amplitude	266	8
Arslan: The Warriors Of Legend	268	5
Assassin's Creed Chronicles: China	257	7
Assassin's Creed Chronicles: India	266	7
Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag	237	8
Assassin's Creed Syndicate	264	4
Assassin's Creed: Unity	251	6
Axiom Verge	256	9
Batman: Arkham Knight	258	9
Battlefield 4	238	8
Battlefield Hardline	256	7
Blazblue Chronophantasma Extend	264	9
Bloodborne	256	9
Bloodborne: The Old Hunters	265	9
Bound By Flame	245	6
Broforce	268	6
Call Of Duty: Advanced Warfare	251	8
Call Of Duty: Black Ops III	264	8
Call Of Duty: Ghosts	238	7
Child Of Light	244	7
CounterSpy	248	5
DariusBurst: Chronicle Saviours	266	8
Dark Souls III	269	9
Day Of The Tentacle Remastered	269	8
Daylight	245	2
Dead Nation: Apocalypse Edition	242	7
Dead Or Alive 5: Last Round	254	7
Destiny	249	9
Destiny: House Of Wolves	258	8
Destiny: The Dark Below	252	7
Destiny: The Taken King	262	9
Devil May Cry 4: Special Edition	258	8
Diablo III: Reaper Of Souls	248	9
Dirty Rally	269	9
Disney Infinity 2.0	249	8
Divinity: Original Sin Enhanced Edition	264	8
Don't Starve	240	8
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Dragon Ball Xenoverse	255	5
Dragon Quest Heroes	263	8
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Dynasty Warriors 8 XLCE	243	8
EA Sports UFC	246	7
EA Sports UFC 2	269	8
Enter The Gungeon	269	8
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Evolve	254	6
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FIFA 16	262	9
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Grim Fandango Remastered	254	8
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Hardware: Rivals	266	5
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Lego Marvel's Avengers	267	6
Lego Marvel Super Heroes	238	8
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Lego The Hobbit	244	6
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Mad Max	262	4
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Metal Gear Solid V: Ground Zeroes	242	8
Metal Gear Solid V: The Phantom Pain	261	9
Middle-earth: Shadow Of Mordor	250	8
Mortal Kombat X	257	9
Murdered: Soul Suspect	246	4
Naruto	261	8
Naruto Shippuden Ultimate Ninja Storm 4	267	8
NBA 2K15	250	8
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Need For Speed Rivals	238	8
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Tales From The Borderlands: Zero Sum	252	7
Tearaway Unfolded	262	7
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The Evil Within	250	8
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Agarest: Generations Of War	187	7
Agarest: Generations Of War 2	223	4
Agarest: Generations Of War Zero	209	5
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Alien Breed 2: Assault	201	8
Alien Breed 3: Descend	204	6
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Amy	215	1
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Armageddon Riders	207	6
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Army Of Two: The 40th Day	188	6
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Assassin's Creed II	186	9
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Battlefield 1943	182	9
Battlefield: Bad Company	168	8

THIS MONTH'S NEW ENTRIES

The newest games, freshly squeezed among all your old favourites

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Dirt Rally	9
Day Of The Tentacle Remastered	8
EA Sports UFC 2	8
Enter The Gungeon	8
Ratchet & Clank	8
Salt And Sanctuary	8
TrackMania Turbo	8

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GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Battlefield: Bad Company 2	190	9
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BattleShip	219	4
Bayonetta*	187	9
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Beat Hazard Ultra	213	7
Beat Sketcher	201	8
Beyond Good & Evil HD	207	8
Beyond: Two Souls	236	7
Binary Domain	217	7
Bionic Commando	169	8
Bionic Commando Remastered	179	8
Bionic Commando Remastered 2	203	6
BioShock	172	9
BioShock 2	189	8
BioShock Infinite	230	9
BlackSite	163	4
Blades of the Hundred Years' War	160	5
BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger	190	8
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift	198	9
Blazing Angels	151	5
Bleach: Soul Resurrección	159	6
Blitz: The League II	172	6
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Blur	193	8
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Borderlands 2	223	9
Borderlands: The Pre-Sequel	250	6
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Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway	171	7
Brutal Legend	185	7
Bulletstorm	203	8
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Burnout Paradise	162	8
Burn Zombie Burn	178	8
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Buzz! Quiz World	185	7
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Call Of Duty: World At War	173	6
Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare	160	9
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 2	186	9
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 3	212	8
Call Of Duty: Black Ops	199	9
Call Of Duty: Black Ops II	226	8
Call Of Juarez: Bound In Blood	181	8
Call Of Juarez: Gunslinger	232	8
Call Of Juarez: The Cartel	208	3
Captain America: Super Soldier	208	7
Castle Crashers	200	9
Castlemania: Harmony Of Despair	212	7
Castlemania: Lords Of Shadow	197	9
Castlemania: Lords Of Shadow 2	241	8
Carnival Island	213	5
Catan	195	8
Cars 2	208	6
The Cave	230	7
Catherine	215	6
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Child Of Eden	211	8
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Civilization Revolution	168	9
Clash Of The Titans	193	6
Clive Barker's Jericho	159	6
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Colin McRae: DiRT 2	184	8
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Commander's Challenge	185	6
Command & Conquer	175	4
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Condemned 2	165	7
Costume Quest	199	7

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Counter Strike: Global Offensive	223	9
Crash Time 4: The Syndicate	218	3
Create	199	7
Critter Crunch	188	9
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Crystal Defenders	184	4
Crysis 2	204	7
Crysis 3	230	6
Cubix HD	207	7
The Cursed Crusade	211	4
Damnation	181	3
Damage Inc: Pacific Squadron WWII	223	3
Dance Dance Revolution	201	5
Dante's Inferno	189	8
Dark Mist	164	5
The Darkness	154	9
The Darkness II	215	7
Dark Sector	165	6
Dark Souls	211	9
Dark Souls II	242	9
Darkstalkers Resurrection	230	8
Dark Void	188	8
Darksiders	188	8
Darksiders II	221	8
DC Universe Online	202	8
de Blob 2	203	6
Dead Or Alive 5	223	7
Dead Island	210	7
Dead Island: Riptide	231	6
Dead Rising 2	197	8
Dead Rising 2: Off The Record	211	6
Dead Space	172	9
Dead Space 2	201	9
Dead Space 3	228	7
Dead Space: Extraction	203	8
Dead Space: Ignition	199	4
Dead To Rights: Retribution	192	6
Deadly Premonition: The Director's Cut	231	8
Deadpool	233	6
DeathSpank	195	8
Def Jam: Icon	151	6
Def Jam Rapstar	199	7
Defiance	231	5
Demon's Souls	193	9
Destroy All Humans!: Path Of The Furor	178	2
Derrick The Deathfin	227	7
Deus Ex: Human Revolution	209	9
Devil May Cry 4	163	9
Devil May Cry HD Collection	217	8
Diablo III	235	9
DiRT 3	206	8
DiRT Showdown	219	7
Disgaea 3: Absence Of Justice	175	8
Dishonored	224	9
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DJ Hero 2	198	8
Doctor Who: The Eternity Clock	220	3
Doom 3: BFG Edition	225	6
Double Dragon Neon	224	4
DmC Devil May Cry	227	9
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Dragon Age II	203	6
Dragon Ball: Raging Blast	186	4
Dragon Ball Z: Burst Limit	168	6
Dragon's Crown	235	8
Dragon's Dogma	218	8
Driver: San Francisco	209	7
Duke Nukem Forever	207	3
D&D: Chronicles Of Mystara	233	8
Dungeon Siege III	206	8
Dust 514	233	5
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 3	208	5
Dynasty Warriors 6: Empires	181	4
Dynasty Warriors 7: Empires	230	4
Dynasty Warriors 8	234	7
EA Sports Active 2	200	8
EA Sports MMA	198	8

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
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echochrome	169	8
echochrome II	202	8
EDF: Insect Armageddon	208	6
The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion	152	9
The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim	212	9
Elefunk	170	4
El Shaddai: Ascension Of The Metatron	208	7
Enchanted Arms	152	6
Enslaved: Odyssey To The West	197	8
Epic Mickey 2: The Power Of Two	226	5
Eternal Sonata	176	8
Eutopia	212	8
Everybody's Golf 5	158	8
Everybody's Golf: World Tour	165	9
Explosion	203	7
Eye Of Judgment	159	6
EyePet	185	8
F1 2012	223	7
F1 Race Stars	226	6
FaceBreaker	170	5
Fairy Fencer F	250	4
Fallout 3	173	10
Fallout: New Vegas	198	8
Fantastic Four: Rise Of The Silver Surfer	155	3
Far Cry 2	172	7
Far Cry 3	226	8
Far Cry 3: Blood Dragon	231	8
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FEAR	151	8
FEAR 2: Project Origin	176	8
FEAR 3	208	6
FIFA 13	223	8
FIFA 14	236	9
FIFA Street (2012)	217	7
Final Fight: Double Impact	193	9
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Fight Night Champion	203	8
Fight Night Round 3	151	8
Fight Night Round 4	181	8
Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn	236	8
Final Fantasy XIII	190	8
Final Fantasy XIII-2	214	8
Final Fantasy XIII: Lightning Returns	240	8
First Of The North Star: Ken's Rage	198	5
Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage 2	230	5
Flight Control HD	198	8
Flock!	179	7
Folklore	158	6
Front Mission Evolved	198	5
Frogger: Hyper Arcade Edition	221	5
From Dust	211	8
Fuel	180	4
Full Auto 2: Battelines	151	6
Fuse	232	7
Game Of Thrones	220	3
Gatling Gears	207	6
Genji: Days Of The Blade	151	3
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2	157	8
Ghost Recon Future Soldier	219	6
Ghostbusters: The Videogame	180	8
G.I. Joe	183	2
The Godfather	151	3
The Godfather II	178	4
God Of War III	190	9
God Of War: Ascension	230	9
God Of War Collection*	188	9
God Of War Collection: Volume II	210	7
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GoldenEye 007: Reloaded	213	6
Gotham City Imposters	216	7
Gran Turismo 5	200	8
Gran Turismo 6	239	8
Grand Theft Auto IV	166	9
Grand Theft Auto V	236	10

Rockstar's latest is a masterpiece, the perfect swansong for the generation and a wonderful addition to the franchise.

*denotes import review

TOP TEN OVERLOOKED GEMS



1 Shadows Of The Damned



2 Hand Of Fate



3 Toukiden Kiwami



4 The Club



5 Battle Fantasia



6 The Red Star



7 Strength Of The Sword 3



8 Blur

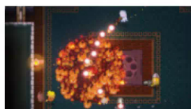


9 God Hand



10 Malicious

PLAY'S BEST GAMES IF YOU LOVE...



GUNS

PLAY: ENTER THE GUNGEON

Dodge Roll's brutal fusion of bullet hell shooter and dungeon-crawling adventure has, like, every famous gun ever in it. Sure, they're playful homages and parodies, but you'll recognise a bunch.



PLAYSTATION MOVE

PLAY: TUMBLE

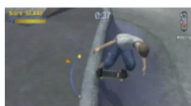
This physics-based puzzler plays out a bit like Jenga – stack your odd shapes high (unless you're told to do otherwise), kick back and enjoy near-1:1 motion control. A solid game, but a great tech demo.



EIGHTIES HORROR MOVIES

PLAY: MORTAL KOMBAT XL

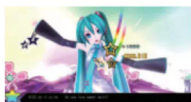
Guest characters in fighting games are here to stay, and NetherRealm is on top of its game. It's Jason and Leatherface versus Alien and Predator – this won't end well.



TRAMPS

PLAY: TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3

Ollie The Magic Bum started out as an objective in *THPS2*, before Neversoft made him playable in the third game. How is he magic? Well, he can levitate. That's pretty magic.



J-POP

PLAY: HATSUNE MIKU: PROJECT DIVA F

Or the second game – they're basically interchangeable, but that doesn't mean they aren't hugely entertaining rhythm-action games with soundtracks you can't help but love...

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Greed Corp	191	7
Grid 2	232	7
Grid Autosport	246	6
GTI Club+	174	7
GTA: Episodes From Liberty City	191	9
Guardians Of Middle-earth	227	7
Guitar Hero III	160	9
Guitar Hero 5	184	8
Guitar Hero Greatest Hits	182	7
Guitar Hero Metallica	179	8
Guitar Hero: Van Halen	189	6
Guitar Hero: Warriors Of Rock	197	7
Guitar Hero World Tour	173	9
Gundemonium Collection	197	8
Gunstar Heroes	181	8
Harry Potter And The Half-Blood Prince	182	6
Harry Potter And The Order Of The Phoenix	155	3
Haze	167	6
Heavenly Sword	157	7
Heavy Rain	189	9
Heavy Weapon	187	7
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The House Of The Dead 4	218	8
The House Of The Dead: Overkill	212	7
Hunted: The Demon's Forge	207	5
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The Incredible Hulk	168	5
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Infamous 2	207	8
Inferno Pool	181	8
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Lego Pirates Of The Caribbean	206	7
Lego Rock Band	187	8
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Lego The Lord Of The Rings	227	7
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LittleBigPlanet 2	201	10
LittleBigPlanet: Karting	225	8
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GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
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The Lord Of The Rings: Conquest	175	5
The Lord Of The Rings: War In The North	213	4
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Lost Planet 3	236	5
Lost Planet: Extreme Condition	163	6
Madagascar 3	224	3
Madden NFL 12	209	8
Madden NFL 13	223	8
Madden NFL Arcade	188	5
Mafia II	196	8
Magic: Duels Of The Planewalkers	202	8
Magic: Duels Of The Planewalkers 2012	208	7
Majin And The Forsaken Kingdom	199	7
Marvel Vs Capcom 2	182	9
Marvel Vs Capcom 3	202	8
Marvel Ultimate Alliance	151	6
Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2	185	6
Max Payne 3	219	7
Mass Effect 2	201	10
Mass Effect 3	216	9
Medal Of Honor	198	8
Medal Of Honor Airborne	161	8
Medal Of Honor: Warfighter	225	7
Mega Man 9	172	7
Mega Man 10	192	8
Menofar 2: World In Flames	171	7
Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance	228	9
Metal Gear Solid 4	167	9
Metal Gear Solid HD Collection	214	9
Metro: Last Light	231	6
Michael Jackson: The Experience	205	5
Microbot	202	5
Midnight Club: Los Angeles	173	8
Windjack	202	3
Minecraft	240	9
Mini Ninjas	184	8
Mirror's Edge	173	7
MLB: The Show 14	245	9
ModNation Racers	192	8
Monkey Island 2: Special Edition	195	9
Mortal Kombat	205	8
Mortal Kombat Vs DC Universe	173	6
MotoGP 13	233	7
Motorhead	173	6
MotorStorm	151	9
MotorStorm: Apocalypse	203	7
MotorStorm: Pacific Rift	172	9
Most: FIM Motocross Championship	217	5
MX Vs ATV Alive	206	4
MX Vs ATV Reflex	189	6
Naruto: Ultimate Ninja Storm	174	6
Naruto Shippuden: UNS Generations	217	5
Naruto Shippuden: UNS 3	230	8
Naughty Bear	195	6
NBA 2K12	211	8
NBA 2K13	224	8
NBA Jam	200	6
NBA Street: Homecourt	151	6
Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit	199	9
Need For Speed: Most Wanted	225	9
Need For Speed ProStreet	161	8
Need For Speed Shift	184	8
Need For Speed: The Run	213	6
Need For Speed Undercover	173	7
NeverDead	215	3
Nier	192	6
Ni No Kuni: Wrath Of The White Witch	227	8
NHL 12	210	7
NHL 13	223	7
NIGHTS Into Dreams...	224	7
Ninja Gaiden Sigma	154	8
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2	184	8
Ninja Gaiden 3	217	6
Ninja Gaiden 3: Razor's Edge	231	8
Noby Noby Boy	177	8
No More Heroes: Heroes' Paradise	206	8
Nucleus	155	8
Okami HD	225	9
One Piece: Pirate Warriors	224	6
Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising	185	7
Operation Flashpoint: Red River	205	7
The Orange Box	161	9

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Outland	207	7
OutRun Online Arcade	180	8
Overlord II	181	6
Pac-Man Championship Edition DX	201	9
Pain	183	6
Payday: The Heist	213	8
Payday 2	235	8
Peggle	189	9
Persona 4 Arena Ultimix	250	9
PES 2012	210	7
PixelJunk 4am	220	4
PixelJunk Eden	169	6
PixelJunk Shooter	187	9
PixelJunk Shooter 2	204	9
PixelJunk SideScroller	213	7
PixelJunk Racers	160	7
PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale	225	8
PlayStation Move Heroes	204	5
Poker Night 2	232	5
Portal 2	205	10
Prince Of Persia	174	8
Prince Of Persia: Classic	173	6
Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	193	6
Prince Of Persia Trilogy	200	8
Prison Break: The Conspiracy	191	4
Prototype	181	7
Prototype 2	219	7
Puddle	216	7
The Punisher: No Mercy	182	4
Puppeteer	236	7
Pure	171	8
Puzzle Quest Galactrix	181	6
Quantum Of Solace	175	5
Quantum Theory	197	2
Race Driver: GRID	167	8
Rag Doll Kung-Fu: Fists Of Plastic	179	8
Rage	211	6
Rainbow Six Vegas	155	9
Rainbow Six Vegas 2	164	8
Rango	203	5
Ratchet & Clank: A Crack In Time	196	8
Ratchet & Clank: All 4 One	211	6
Ratchet & Clank: Q-Force	227	5
Ratchet & Clank: Tools Of Destruction	160	7
Ratchet & Clank Trilogy HD	221	9
Rayman Legends	235	8
Rayman Origins	212	8
Red Dead Redemption	193	9
Red Faction: Armageddon	207	6
Red Faction: Guerrilla	180	8
Remember Me	232	6
Renegade Ops	211	7
Resident Evil Chronicles HD Collection	221	8
Resident Evil Code Veronica X	211	7
Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City	217	3
Resident Evil: Revelations HD	232	7
Resident Evil 4 HD	210	9
Resident Evil 5	177	8
Resident Evil 6	223	8
Resistance: Fall Of Man	151	8
Resistance 2	173	9
Resistance 3	210	9
Resonance Of Fate	191	8
Retro City Rampage	228	7
Ridge Racer 7	151	7
Ridge Racer Unbounded	217	6
Rift: Everyday Shooter	162	8
Rise Of The Argonauts	176	5
Risen 2: Dark Waters	222	5
Risen 3: Titan Lords	248	2
Risk: Factions	202	8
Rock Band Blitz	223	8
Rock Band	169	9
Rock Band 2	179	9
Rock Band 3	199	9
Rocksmith	223	7
Rogue Warrior	188	1
Rugby World Cup 2011	209	4
Rune Factory Oceans	220	5
RUSE	197	8
The Saboteur	187	6
Sacred 2: Fallen Angel	180	7
Sacred 3	247	6
Saints Row 2	172	7
Saints Row: The Third	211	8
Saints Row IV: Gat Out Of Hell	253	6
SBK Generations	220	5

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playhouse	194	9
Savage Moon	175	8
Saw	186	5
SBK Generations	220	5
The Secret Of Monkey Island SE	195	9
Section 8: Prejudice	209	8
Sega Mega Drive Ultimate Collection	177	8
Sega Rally	158	9
Sega Rally Online Arcade	208	7
Sengoku Basara: Samurai Heroes	198	7
Shadows Of The Damned	207	8
Shank	197	8
Shatter	183	9
Shaun White Skateboarding	198	7
Shaun White Snowboarding	173	7
Shellsack 2: Blood Trails	177	3
Shift 2: Unleashed	204	6
Silent Hill: Downpour	217	8
Silent Hill HD Collection	217	7
Silent Hill: Homecoming	174	6
The Simpsons Game	160	8
The Sims 3	199	8
The Sims 3: Pets	212	7
SingStar	159	8
Singularity	195	8
Siren Blood Curse	170	6
Skate	159	8
Skate 2	175	8
Skate 3	192	8
Skullgirls	218	8
Sleeping Dogs	222	8
The Sly Collection	200	8
Sly Cooper: Thieves In Time	230	6
Sniper Elite V2	218	5
Sniper: Ghost Warrior	206	4
Sniper: Ghost Warrior 2	230	5
SOCOM: Special Forces	205	6
Sonic: The Hedgehog 4: Episode 1	199	8
Sonic: The Hedgehog 4: Episode 2	225	4
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing	190	7
Sonic & All-Stars Racing Transformed	227	9
Sonic Generations	212	7
Sonic The Hedgehog	151	5
Sonic Unleashed	175	4
Sorcery	219	7
SoulCalibur IV	169	9
SoulCalibur V	214	8
South Park: The Stick of Truth	242	8
Spec Ops: The Line	220	7
Spider-Man 3	155	3
Spider-Man: Edge Of Time	212	3
Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions	197	6
Spider-Man: Web Of Shadows	173	5
Spin Jam	174	3
Splatterhouse	200	5
Splinter Cell Double Agent	153	7
Split/Second: Velocity	192	9
Sports Champions	196	8
SSX	216	4
Stacking	203	8
Starhawk	219	8
Star Ocean: The Last Hope International	190	6
Star Trek	231	5
Star Trek: D-A-C	189	5
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed	171	6
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II	199	6
Star Wars: Pinball	230	7
Start The Party!	196	7
Stormrise	178	5
Stranglehold	159	6
Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike Online Edition	209	9
Street Fighter IV	176	9
Street Fighter X Tekken	217	8
Strength Of The Sword 3	234	8
Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo Remix	168	7
Super Street Fighter IV: Arcade Edition	207	9
Stuntman: Ignition	157	8
Super Stardust HD	155	7
Superstars V8: Next Challenge	190	5
Superstars V8 Racing	181	6
Super Street Fighter II Turbo HD Remix	176	7
Super Street Fighter IV	191	9
Supremacy MMA	211	4
Syndicate	216	7
Tales Of Graces f	222	7
Tales Of Monkey Island	196	9

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Tales Of Xillia	234	7
Tales Of Xillia 2	249	7
Tekken 5: Dark Resurrection Online	161	8
Tekken 6	184	9
Tekken Tag Tournament 2	223	9
Test Drive Ferrari Racing Legends	221	6
Tetris	202	8
Test Drive Unlimited 2	203	6
The Amazing Spider-Man	221	6
The Last Of Us	233	10
The Testament Of Sherlock Holmes	224	5
The Walking Dead	231	9
The Walking Dead: Survival Instinct	231	2
Thor: God Of Thunder	206	3
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 14	231	6
Time Crisis 4	166	7
Time Crisis: Razing Storm	199	5
TimeShift	162	7
TMNT: Turtles In Time-Re-shelled	186	5
TNA Impact!	171	7
Tokyo Jungle	222	8
Tom Clancy's EndWar	173	8
Tom Clancy's HAWX	177	7
Tom Clancy's HAWX 2	196	7
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Blacklist	235	7
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Trilogy HD	210	7
Tomb Raider	229	9
Tomb Raider Trilogy	204	8
Tomb Raider: Underworld	173	8
Tony Hawk's Project 8	151	8
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater HD	223	7
Tony Hawk's Proving Ground	160	7
Tony Hawk: Ride	188	5
Top Gun: Hard Lock	218	4
Top Spin 3	168	7
Top Spin 4	203	7
Top Story 3	195	8
Transformers: Dark Of The Moon	208	6
Transformers: Fall Of Cybertron	223	7
Transformers: War For Cybertron	194	8
Trash Panic	181	7
Trine	184	8
Trinity: Souls Of Zill O'll	202	5
Trinity Universe	194	6
Tron Evolution	200	1
Tumble	198	7
Turning Point: Fall Of Liberty	165	4
Turok	163	4
Twisted Metal	216	6
UFC Undisputed 2009	180	9
UFC Undisputed 2010	193	8
UFC Undisputed 3	215	8
Ultimate Marvel Vs Capcom 3	212	8
Ultra Street Fighter IV	246	9
Uncharted: Drake's Fortune	161	8
Uncharted 2: Among Thieves	185	10
Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception	212	9
Unearthed: Trail Of Ibn Battuta: Episode 1	233	1
The Unfinished Swan	225	7
Unreal Tournament III	162	8
Untold Legends: Dark Kingdom	151	5
Valkyria Chronicles	173	8
Vanquish	197	9
Viking: Battle For Asgard	165	7
Virtua Fighter 5: Final Showdown	220	9
Virtua Tennis 3	150	9
Virtua Tennis 4	205	7
The Walking Dead: All That Remains	240	8
The Walking Dead: 400 Days	234	8
Wanted: Weapons Of Fate	179	6
Warhammer 40,000: Space Marine	210	5
Warhawk	157	8
Warriors: Legends Of Troy	202	1
Warriors Orochi 3	217	5
Watchmen: The End Is Nigh	183	5
Way Of The Samurai 3	190	2
Wet	184	4
Wheelman	178	7
Where The Wild Things Are	188	5
White Knight Chronicles	190	5
White Knight Chronicles II	207	4
WipeOut HD	172	8
Wolfenstein	183	7
Worms 2: Armageddon	198	8
Worms Ultimate Mayhem	217	8
WRC 3 FIA World Rally Championship	225	7
WWE All Stars	204	8

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
WWE 13	225	5
XCOM: Enemy Unknown	224	9
Thinking, planning, failing and dying is back in fashion: XCOM is a phenomenal reimagining of a classic title and an instant classic in its own right.		
X-Men Destiny	211	3
X-Men Origins: Wolverine	179	7
YaiBa: Ninja Golden Z	242	3
Yakuza: Dead Souls	216	6
Yakuza 3	191	8
Yakuza 4	203	8
Yakuza 5*	264	9
Zen Pinball 2	224	9
Zone Of The Enders HD Collection	226	8

VITA



GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
A-Men	217	7
Army Corps Of Hell	217	6
Assassin's Creed III: Liberation	225	7
Atelier Meruru: The Apprentice Of Arland	221	3
Everybody's Golf	215	8
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift Extend	216	8
Broken Age	257	5
Call Of Duty: Black Ops Declassified	227	2
Danganronpa: Trigger Happy Havoc	242	8
Danganronpa 2: Goodbye Despair	249	9
Dead Nation	201	8
Destiny Of Spirits	244	7
Dokuro	230	7
Earth Defense Force 2017 Portable	230	8
Escape Plan	216	8
FIFA Football	216	8
Flow	151	9
Flower	176	8
Gravity Crash	187	8
Gravity Rush	219	9
Hustle Miami	233	9
Hustle Kings	216	8
Joe Danger	194	9
Killzone: Mercenary	236	9
LittleBigPlanet	223	9
Little Deviants	215	6
Lumines Electric Symphony	216	8
Metal Gear Solid HD Collection	221	7
ModNation Racers: Road Trip	215	5
Mortal Kombat	219	8
MotorStorm RC	217	8
Muramasa Rebirth	234	8
New Little King's Story	224	7
Ninja Gaiden Sigma Plus	217	7
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2 Plus	230	6
Oddworld: Stranger's Wrath HD	214	8
Orghythm	230	5
PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale	225	8
Persona 4 Golden	228	9
PixelJunk Monsters	163	9
Puddle	222	8
Rayman Origins	216	8
Reality Fighters	215	5
Resistance: Burning Skies	219	5
Ridge Racer	216	4
Rocketbirds: Hardboiled Chicken	212	8
Silent Hill: Book Of Memories	225	3
Sorcery Saga: Curse Of The Great Curry God	240	7
Soul Sacrifice	232	9
Sound Shapes	223	8
Superbeat Xonic	265	7
Superfrog HD	234	4
Super Monkey Ball: Banana Splitz	224	7
Sumoni: Demon Arts	230	4
Super Stardust Delta	216	8
Tearaway	239	8
Terraria	232	8
Touch My Katamari	216	8
Toukiden: The Age Of Demons	241	8
Ultimate Marvel vs Capcom 3	216	8
Uncharted: Fight For Fortune	227	8
Uncharted: Golden Abyss	215	8
Unit 13	216	6
Velocity Ultra	233	8
Virtua Tennis 4: World Tour Edition	215	8
Virtue's Last Reward	227	8
WipeOut 2048	215	9

WHAT WE'RE PLAYING...

Watch out! Games!



WHAT (have they been playing?)
Uncharted 4: A Thief's End
WHY (was it chosen?)
As if I'd be playing anything else...

LUKE ALBIGES

I'M FAMOUSLY AWFUL at sticking to just one game at a time – NASA is currently looking into using my backlog as a makeshift ladder for reaching the moon to save on rocket fuel. So when something as exciting as this comes along, you better believe I'm just going to drop everything, stick the rest of the world on 'ignore' and disappear into the biggest release of the year. So far, I'm loving the emergent set-pieces that the new mechanics allow for, and Naughty Dog's graphical work continues to be the best in the business. A Crushing run is in the pipeline once I manage to work up the courage (Hard was bad enough) and multiplayer seems good, but I need to play a bunch more to decide if I actually like it. But now this is out, what's the next big game on the horizon? Don't let me down, Guerrilla...



WHAT (have they been playing?)
THE WITNESS
WHY (was it chosen?)
It's my new Fez

REBECCA RICHARDS

EVERYONE WHO KNOWS me knows I love Fez, truly, madly, deeply. But right now, it's got a contender for its puzzling throne: The Witness. Right now, I'm wandering around in the mountain, logic-raging my way through some of the trickiest puzzles I've ever encountered, and I am loving every infuriating, eye-bleeding, knuckle-whitening second of it.

*denotes import review

NEXT MONTH IN

PLAY.



BLAST FROM THE PAST!

BATTLEFIELD 1

DICE reveals all about its long-awaited
return to the trenches



ON iOS & ANDROID 30 JUNE